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APRIL 1994

ISSUE NO 26

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ROY OF THE ROVERS
ALIVE AND KICKIN'

X-MEN ANIMATED

FREDDIES LAST DANCE

STOP PRESS: READER'S RESULTS

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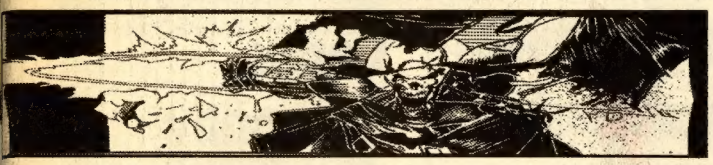

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We didn't plan for this issue to carry a theme, but rebirth seems to run through more of this month's articles. Jerry Ordway was one of the guys who killed Superman, and then brought him back, and has recently breathed new life into Captain Marvel; Roy of the Rovers crashed out of life at Melchester Rovers, and out of comics, only to be reborn a few months ago; the Megazine celebrates 50 issues with a revamp and a make-over for Cassie Anderson; and in 2099 someone is being remade in the image of Ghost Rider, which you can learn all about in our interview with Chris Bachalo. Even in the small press, Freddie's Last Dance rose from the ashes of Mindbenders.

And here at Aceville Comic World soars, phoenix-like from the ashes of a fallen typesetter. Here's the full griff:

On Wednesday January the 19th our typesetters gave up the ghost of working out the recession and called in the liquidators, selling off their machinery, office chairs, tables - the lot. With them went the setting for the March issue. We had a couple of pages made up and back with us in the office, but 95% of the setting vanished. That was at ten in the morning. We started from scratch again with a new typesetter. At four in the afternoon we'd struck a deal with some new guys and I was on the phone to Jerry Ordway, doing the interview which you can read this issue.

Over the next couple of days everything was pretty chaotic as everyone pitched in to help. Dave, Mick and Doug performed some serious miracles, taking on the setting on top of their normal workload and turning it round as quickly as possible. Dave and Barbara and the crew at our colour repro house offered to set sections of the colour pages. Graham (designer) and Alex Baldock were setting headings and running off proofs. By the 26th everything that needed to be reset had been typed up onto computer disk, and over the next ten days was printed out and proofed. The paste-up took four very solid days and the pages rushed off to the printers. Mark, who had kept in touch throughout, promised us a high-speed turnaround. And came up trumps: although we lost a day because of the snow, we had the magazine back in the office and into our distributors within a few days. Comic World #25 hit some shops on the 17th instead of the 11th.

Out of the ashes, and I think it was in pretty good shape when it reached you. This is my chance to thank everyone for really pulling together and doing us so proud.

We were so pleased with the results that we're sticking with much the same team for this issue, done at a far more leisurely pace, although still suffering a few birthing pains. To help us sort them out we've switched schedules so that CW will now be appearing on the third Friday of the month instead of the second - so the next issue is out April 15th, the following one on May 20th, etcetera, etcetera. That in itself has meant adjustments for everybody from contributors all the way through the distributors, so they all deserve a second bunch of Thanks.

Someone who needs an apology: I didn't credit Denis Gifford last issue for the Roy Davies obituary, so my sincere apologies to him and to the Independent for any distress this caused. Not my intention.

No room here to give you next month's line-up, but it's a good 'un. Don't forget, we're out on Friday, April 16.

Contributors: Chris Bayliss, Paul H. Birch, Neil Cooper, Joe Farringale, Phil Hall, Richard Hill, Dave McLoughlin, Pete Taylor

Cover: Judge Cassandra Anderson. Sigh Division (too good a joke to let it rest). This month's spaced-out cover is by Tony Luke, whose Dominator we featured back in issue #16. Check out the anime news in the Multi Media for more on Tony's work. Cassie is, of course, © Fleetway Editions, and used here with permission. Don't even *think* about ripping them off.

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Readers Poll Results

Because of our new schedule we can present the results of the 1994 Comic World Readers Poll. The positions were closely fought in many categories, some positions being swayed by a single vote. However, fans of Neil Gaiman helped him sweep the board in many categories, as Best Writer, author of the Best Ongoing and Best Limited series in the shape of *Sandman* and *Death: The High Cost of Living*. *Sandman #50* also won the Best Single Issue, and *Death* artists Chris Bachalo & Mark Buckingham picked up best penciller and inker respectively. *Sandman* editor Karen Berger came out the winner in a tightly contested battle with David Bishop of the *Judge Dredd Megazine*, and Todd Klein, *Sandman* letterer proved a runaway winner.

Runaway also describes the win by Steve Oliff and Olyoptics for Best Colourist; at one point it seemed that Steve's was the only name that anyone knew! A tighter battle between titles was our Best One-Shot/Graphic Novel, scooped at the last moment by *Cerebus #0* by Dave Sim & Gerhard over *Vendetta in Gotham*, the rematch of Batman & Dredd.

Glenn Fabry topped Todd for first place as Best Penciller/Inker, his work in 1993 including Slaine in *2000AD* and covers for DC's *Hellblazer* and *Scarab*. Todd was again pipped at the post for Best Writer/Artist as a late run of votes for his *Spawn/Batman* collaborator, Frank Miller carried the latter over the winning line.

Catwoman was the surprise winner of Best New Title: no implied insult intended as it's a fine magazine from Jo Duffy (whom we interviewed in *CW #19*), yet this category received the most No Votes; either too many good titles out there to choose from...or not enough.

Jeff Smith stormed into first place for Most Promising New Writer. His *Bone* has been running since 1992 but only in the last year been picked up by many readers. Frank Quitely *isn't* such a newcomer, although his name was only first seen last year: for more on Frank, fast forward to page 40.

An interview with Chris appears this issue, with some exclusive preview artwork from *Ghost Rider 2099* inked by Mark. Next month we hope to have some comments from our winners. In the meantime, thanks to everyone for voting.

Best Ongoing Title
1 **Sandman**
2 Shade the Changing Man
3= Spawn
3= Judge Dredd Megazine

Best One-Shot/ Graphic Novel
1 **Cerebus #0**
2 Vendetta in Gotham
3 Batman: Dark Joker - The Wild

Best Limited Series
1 **Death: High Cost of Living**
2 Enigma
3 Marvels

Best Story in a Single Issue
1 **Sandman #50**
2 Daredevil: Man Without Fear #1
3 Marvels #1

Best Penciller
1 **Chris Bachalo**
2 Joe Quesada
3 Mike Mignola

Best Inker
1 **Mark Buckingham**
2 Mark Farmer
3 Al Williamson

Best Penciller/Inker
1 **Glenn Fabry**
2 Todd McFarlane
3= Alex Ross
3= Kevin Walker

Best Writer
1 **Neil Gaiman**
2 Frank Miller
3 Pete Milligan

Best Writer/Artist
1 **Frank Miller**
2 Todd McFarlane
3 John Byrne

Best Colourist
1 **Steve Oliff**
2 Danny Vozzo
3 Matt Brooker

Best Letterer
1 **Todd Klein**
2 Tom Orzechowski
3 Ellie De Ville

Best Editor
1 **Karen Berger**
2 David Bishop
3 Bob Harras

Most Promising New Title
1 **Catwoman**
2 The Maxx
3 Scarab

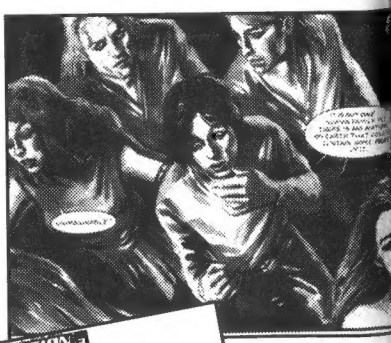
Most Promising New Writer
1 **Jeff Smith**
2 Nick Abadzis
3 Robbie Morrison

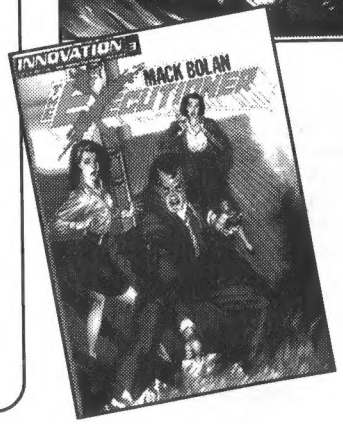
Most Promising New Artist
1 **Frank Quitely**
2 Rebecca Guay
3 Gary Amaro

Comic Company Closures and Cut-backs: *Confirmations and Denials*

INNOVATION

Further to last month's news, Innovation Publishing ceased trading on December 31 when one of the company's financial backers called in his secured loan. As the company was unable to pay, the creditor took over the assets of the company, everything ranging from the office furniture to ownership of *Hero Alliance* and *Power Factor*. Innovation was noted for its comic book adaptations of novels and TV shows such as *Interview With A Vampire* and *Queen of the Damned* (both based on Anne Rice novels), *Lost in Space*, *Quantum Leap*, *On A Pale Horse* (based on a novel by Piers Anthony), and *Mack Bolan:*





The Executioner. The Anne Rice adaptations were both due to end at issue #12, due to ship in January, and *Interview With A Vampire* may yet be completed.

Rights to the various series are not transferable, and revert to their original owners. Bill Mumy, writer of *Lost in Space* and Will Robinson in the original series, is seeking a new publisher for his latest 12-part series *Voyage to the Bottom of the Soul*.

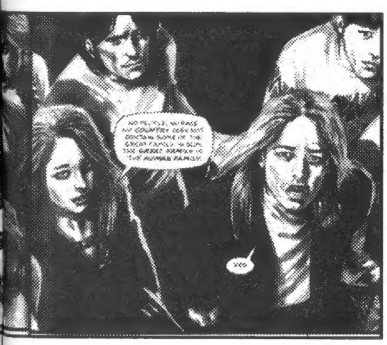
CRY FOR DAWN

Cry For Dawn Productions was dissolved in October 1993 due, according to Joseph M. Lisner, to copyright disputes between the creators and co-founders of the company, Lisner and Joe Monks. The latter continues to publish under the CFD Productions banner. All Cry For Dawn titles have been cancelled, and *Cry For Dawn*, the horror anthology, will end with #9. Material intended for *Cry For Dawn #10* will appear from Sirius Comics in the Spring under the title *Drama* which will also include a fully-painted Dawn story that was intended for the *Cry For Dawn Compilation Book*.

DEFIANT

Rumours that Defiant are on a shaky footing began with the cancellation of products from their licensing division, The River Group, which recently postponed production on the *Defiant Universe Card Collection*, *Dark Dominion Tin Set*, *Splatterbowl I Game Highlight Tin Set*, and the *Mule Vs. Chasm Tin Set*, citing an overcrowded market as the cause.

Talking on January 25, Jim Shooter claimed that, although experiencing problems during the glut, Defiant itself was ahead of budget targets and he was pleased with Defiant's success.



Shooter will be writing three or four issues of *Youngblood* for Rob Liefeld, which should return this summer with issue #6. After Liefeld's first four-issue story, Shooter's will run to issue 12 or 13, Liefeld saying that he hopes Shooters will be the definitive Youngblood.

Defiant have announced that they continue to plan for eight monthly titles, with *Dogs of War* slated for April, *Prudence & Caution* due May and *Glory* scheduled for August or September.

ECLIPSE

One of the longest-running independent comic producers, Eclipse Enterprises Inc. are in hiatus following the divorce proceedings of two of its directors, Cat Yronwood and Dean Mullaney, both of whom owned one third of the shares in the company. Yronwood told *Comic World* that she had traded her shares when Mullaney demanded his half-share of the house they had bought during their twelve-year marriage. Eclipse is currently down from twelve employees to five, and selling off much of their warehoused stock for remainder; Yronwood has joined Claypool Comics, for whom Eclipse acted as distributors when they began publishing as well as continuing with her interests outside comics.

Eclipse began publishing in 1977, over the years producing some memorable titles ranging from *Miracleman* to *Tales of Beanworld*. Their recent line-up had included a large number of graphic novelisations of stories by leading horror writers, Clive Barker and Dean R. Koontz. A deal with British publishers, HarperCollins, who have been producing an Eclipse reprint line is also in hiatus.

The recently solicited *The G.R.I.P #2* and *Miracleman Triumphant* may, or may not, appear as scheduled in April.

MAJESTIC

Majestic Entertainment Inc., founded in 1993, have lost publisher Valarie Jones, who resigned in late January. Books slated to appear in January, *Legacy #3* and *S.T.A.T. #2*, have been delayed and will appear in the 'near future', and titles due for May solicitation have also been delayed. President, Larry Snyder, has said that Majestic will be back in full production soon.

MIRAGE PUBLISHING

The NEXT Universe of titles, *Xenotech #2 & #3*, *Stupid Heroes #2 & #3*, and *Bioneers #1* have all been cancelled until Fall, caused by delays in switching Mirage titles from black & white to colour format, the search for a suitable colourist, and the addition of the three titles to Mirage's regular schedules.

NEMESIS

Although rumoured to be closing, the Nemesis arm of Harvey Comics continues to solicit and publish material. *seaQuest DSV*, based on the Amblin/Universal TV show, and the first Nemesis title, has been cancelled, after MCA Universal who produce the TV show expressed some concern over the amount of violence depicted in the comic. Issue #1 becomes the final issue, but *Frank #3* recently hit the comic shops, and *Ultraman #4* is solicited for May. However, the Nemesis banner may be replaced with a new action/ adventure line.

Harvey's *Alvin and the Chipmunks #6* has been cancelled. Surely not for violence?

OTHERS

Unconfirmed reports have also indicated that Comico and Now Comics have either ceased trading or have significant production delays.

TOP30

1 (-) **Spawn/Batman** (Image)
2 (1) **X-Men #32** (Marvel)
3 (2) **Uncanny X-Men #312** (Marvel)
4 (-) **Batman/Spawn** (DC)
5 (4) **Sandman #60** (DC)
6 (3) **X-Force #34** (Marvel)
7 (5) **X-Factor #102** (Marvel)
8 (-) **Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix #1** (Marvel)
9 (7) **Wolverine #81** (Marvel)
10 (8) **WildC.A.T.S #9** (Image)
11 (6) **X-Men 2099 #8** (Marvel)
12 (10) **Hellblazer #77** (DC)
13 (9) **Batman #507** (DC)
14 (17) **Sin City: A Dame to Kill for #5** (Dark Horse)
15 (14) **Previews vol 4:#3** (Diamond)
16 (11) **Pitt #4** (Image)
17 (12) **Legends of the Dark Knight #60** (DC)
18 (-) **X-Factor Annual #9** (Marvel)
19 (13) **Detective Comics #674** (DC)
20 (16) **Cable #11** (Marvel)
21 (15) **Excalibur #77** (Marvel)
22 (-) **Aliens/Predator: Deadliest of the Species #5** (Dark Horse)
23 (21) **Incrdible Hulk #417** (Marvel)
24 (20) **Spider-Man 2099 #19** (Marvel)
25 (23) **Amazing Spider-Man #389** (Marvel)
26 (19) **Batman: Shadow of the Bat #27** (DC)
27 (-) **Spiderman/X-Factor: Shadowgates #1** (Marvel)
28 (-) **Books of Magic #1** (DC)
29 (22) **Fantastic Four #388** (Marvel)
30 (-) **Deathblow #4** (Image)

Top 30 supplied by Titan Distributors

Sales Decline

Figures available from Diamond Distributors indicate that sales have shown a steady downward trend since the incredible high of April 1993, and total dollar sales are down for the fifth month in a row. Advance order for titles in December 1993 were down 27% over orders in December 1992, recovering slightly in January, but still down 16% over order for January 1993. Sales over the past two months are lagging slightly below the average sales over the whole year of 1992. The glut of titles throughout the summer of 1993 has reversed the upward trend of advance ordering seen over the past couple of years, with retailers making more conservative estimates of sales, although estimated figures put the combined advance orders for the *Spawn/Batman: Red Scare* and *Batman/Spawn: War Devil* crossovers at over a million copies, the Miller/McFarlane $3.95 book making up 60% of the sales against DC's $4.95 version. The number of titles solicited in January was around 640, compared to an average of 675 titles a month in 1993. Only just over half (54.7%) of the titles that shipped in January were January titles. A further 30% of titles shipping in January were from December, and around 16% had been due in November or earlier. Marvel's $1.25 titles have risen to $1.50 for March.

The Direct Line Group, an influential retail organisation in the USA, recently reported what they felt were ten of the major problems facing the industry: (1) Lack of cash at the retail level, (2) Poor sell-throughs at retail, (3) Late comics, (4) Mis-solicited comics, (5) The inability of retailers to accurately order the first four issues of new, ongoing series, (6) The inability of retailers to accurately order any issue of a mini-series, (7) Failure of traditional retail systems to estimate the demand for upcoming releases, (8) Wasted money and energy in processing returns, (9) An industry-wide lack of knowledge about the production of comics, and (10) A need for technological advances in order gathering and processing at all levels.

They proposed a change in the Direct Market solicitation system which would allow orders to be adjusted by retailers much closer to the print deadlines of publishers in certain circumstances, for example where a creative team had changed on a title, and on late-shipping products. Comics would otherwise remain non-returnable.

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The distributors to the Direct Market have themselves already brought in some very important changes to address the problems faced by retailers, particularly of late-shipping titles: Diamond Distributors are operating a 30-day cancellation policy from this month (for product due to ship in May), and Capital City Distributors have announced that a fine system will operate for publishers who ship late: $500 to cancel a product, $750 to resolicit, and any late-running title becomes fully-returnable with 20% of the gross on non-returned copies forfeited to Capital. This would especially hit small press publishers who are more likely to find that advance orders aren't enough to cover their print bills and may wish to rework their solicitation or cancel a title.

Any changes in the soliciting system which relate to orders however still fail to answer the simple problem that retailers cannot predict sales accurately. A great help would be more realistic advance solicitation material which would indicate significant events in storylines, and less mis-information, such as the recent case of the Spider-Man-reveals-himself story in *Spider-Man Unlimited #4*, which shipped in December: Peter Parker did *not* reveal himself as Spider-Man (an actor dressed in a Spider-Man costume did that), and many fans who had ordered the issue on the strength of the solicitation were disappointed. Such mis-information has certainly been significant in the erosion of the speculator market.

BATMAN v PUNISHER

With the success of Batman/Spawn we can, no doubt, expect more cross-company team-ups. No sooner said than announced: Batman will battle it out with The Punisher, following in the trail of other successful DC/Marvel crossovers like Superman/Spider-Man and X-Men/Teen Titans. Both will be 48-page one-shots, self-contained but thematically linked.

Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire's will ship in June from DC, the battle of the vigilantes penned by Batman editor Denny O'Neil with art by Barry Kitson & James Pascoe. The Marvel Punisher/Batman will ship in July, written and drawn by Chuck Dixon, John Romita Jr, & Klaus Janson. This is Romita's first ever Batman, and he claims to be "really pumped up on this project".

"The opportunity for a team-up book couldn't have come at a better time in the ongoing Batman continuity," says Denny O'Neil. "The many opportunities are intriguing." None moreso than to note the current events in both Batman and Punisher stories which begs the question, which Batman will meet which Punisher?

DC and Malibu have a crossover in the future, literally, when a 4-issue Star Trek: Deep Space Nine/Next Generation begins in October, with two issues from each company two #1s and two #2s. The Malibu half is written by Mike W. Barr and Michael Jan Friedman pens the DC half. The whole will be drawn by Gordon Purcell & Terry Pallott. The two series are brought together by a threat to the wormhole guarded by the Deep Space 9 space station.

BARBIE'S VENGEANCE

Members of the New York-based Barbie Liberation Organization (BLO) stepped up their protest against gender-based stereotyping in children's toys by switching the voice circuitry in 300 G.I. Joe and Barbie dolls before smuggling them back into stores. Buying the dolls over Christmas, some parents were surprised to hear the gun-toting G.I. asking "Will I *ever* have enough clothes?", and "Let's go to the beach!" and happily claiming "I just *love* going shopping with you!".

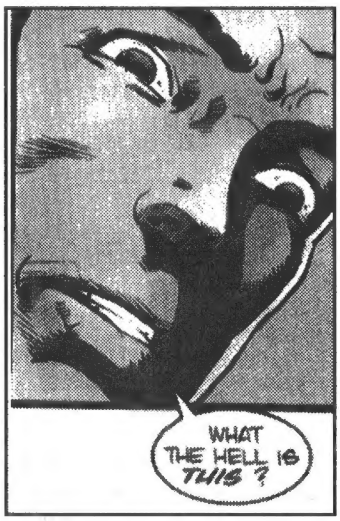
Meanwhile, the doctored Barbie was growling "Vengeance Is Mine!", "Attack!", "Eat lead, Cobra!" and "Dead Men Tell No Lies".

LOS ANGELES QUAKE

January 17, 1994: A 6.6 Richter Scale earthquake hit the Northridge area of Los Angeles at 4.10am. Many top industry creators who live in the area were hit: even those some distance away felt both the shock and the aftershock (see our interview with Chris Bachalo for some first hand comments). We briefly round-up some of the news we've been able to gather from various sources, particularly *Comic Buyers Guide* whose reporter Bob Ingersoll kept the paper informed via CompuServe and phone, and *Locus*:

Forest J Ackerman (SF archivist and movie collector): the

Ackermansion survived, but most of the famous Ackermann collection was dumped on the floor...**Kyle Baker** was reported OK...**Mike W. Barr** was shaken but otherwise fine...**Kevin Bricklin** of Harvey Comics said that the office is a mess...**Howard Chaykin** is OK, but the planned interview with *Comic World* was put on hold (that's the only quake damage we have to report)...**Dangerous Visions** (Bookstore) lost its front window and had books dumped from shelves, but was otherwise OK...**Harlan Ellison** suffered a broken nose when he fell downstairs in the dark when the power cut out. Suffered concussion and contusions, but otherwise survived intact, as did his wife who had recently undergone surgery. He lost a lot of artwork, statues and the chandeliers. **Ed Bryant** was a house guest at the time...**Mark Evanier** was working at his computer when the quake hit. He lost power, and all his possessions were on the floor: "I haven't gotten a professional opinion yet, but it looks like I'm alive"...**Flights of Fantasy** (SF Bookstore) was totalled and owners Monique Roy-Gans & Jean-Pierre Wolfe forced to relocate...**Steve Gerber** reported his house shaken, but there was no serious damage or injuries except to a book case. **David Gerrald** (SF



writer, Star Trek scripter & novelist) lived close to Northridge Meadows Apartments where 16 people died. His house seems fine, but a brick wall surrounding the back yard collapsed. One cat missing...**Graphitti Designs:** everyone was fine...the house of **Kurt Hathaway** of Extreme Studios sustained some serious damage...**Matthew Hawkins** (PR for Extreme Studios) woke up to violent shaking and went outside to watch the power converters explode...**Horizon Hobbies** (makers of licensed figures): the building survived, but some of the original sculptures from which kits were made didn't, including Maoto Hata's Superman statuette which has been rescheduled for April/May, along with a many other kits, including Spider-Man, Spider-Man 2099, Cable, Lobo, Steel and She Hulk. Not so tough, after all...**James Hudnall** was thrown out of bed, but only a few things fell over: "There was a noise like the world coming to an end"...**Image** reported that a couple of employees didn't make it into work because it wasn't safe to drive...and Publisher **Tony Lobito** claimed he was feeling seasick in Image's tenth story office due to the aftershocks...**Stan & Joan Lee** suffered some damage to their house but were otherwise fine...**Barry R. Levin**, owner of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature book store reported that the shop suffered severe structural damage, but 99% of stock was OK...**Jean-Marc & Randy Lofficier** were both OK...**Tom Luth** was shaken, but suffered no damage...Shawn McManus reported OK...**Malibu:** the offices survived fine but lost phones and power. However, their new offices which they were due to move to shortly was flooded...**Tom Mason** (of Malibu)'s house sustained no damage...**Frank Miller & Lynn Varley:** house sustained minor damage...**Bill Mumy** was OK, but his computer printer broke...one wall of **Larry Niven**'s house collapsed **in house**, but otherwise he was fine...**Dave Olbrich** (Malibu) reported both family and puppy safe...**Dan Panosian** was said to be fine...**James Robinson** is OK...**Scott Rosenberg** (Publisher, Malibu): sustained $10,000 damage to his home, "but I still have a home!"...**Eric Senna** (Manufacturing Manager, Malibu) suffered severe damage to home... the filming of *Ill Met By Moonlight* by **S.P. Somtow** (Somtow Sucharitkil) resumed shooting after a two-day hiatus...**Star Trek: The Next Generation:** the crew are fine, but one of the sets had a huge crack in it. The Paramount computer system crashed... **Dave Stevens** was OK but his house was in bad shape...**Harry Turtledove** (SF writer) was on GEnie when the quake hit. He vacated the room pronto as everything collapsed behind him. The computer landed on the chair he had just vacated, and survived...**Mark Verheiden**, 25 miles from the epicentre in Pasadena, reported that things were a real mess but he was fine...**Len Wein** was fine, but his house is a mess, and there was lots of local damage...**Marv Wolfman**'s house was a mess, but sound enough...**Lois Lane (& Clark)**: two of the sets for the series on Warner's lot were damaged, including the *Daily Planet* office, but filming of the second series resumed three days later...Amongst those also reported safe are Steven Barnes, Robert Bloch, J.M. Dillard, Dennis Etchison, Dorothy Fontana, Frank & Laura Kelly Freas, Richard Mathieson, Richard Christian Mathieson, Vonda McIntyre, Bruce Pelz (whose cat died when a wall fell on it), Jerry Pournelle (whose cat ran away for a day), William

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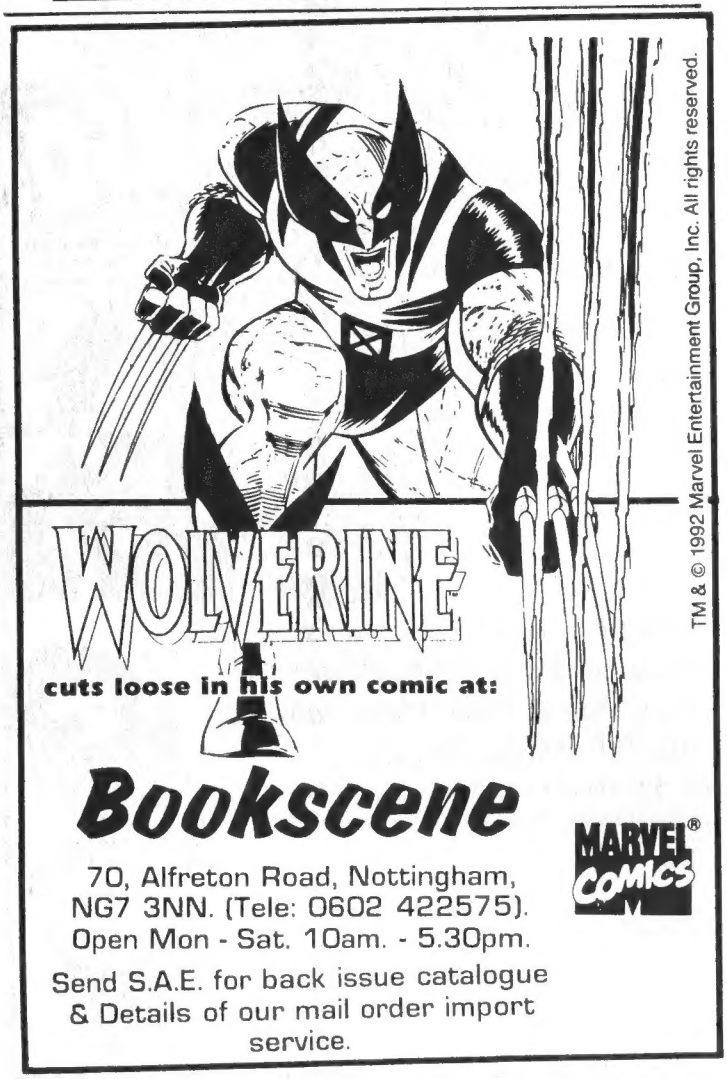

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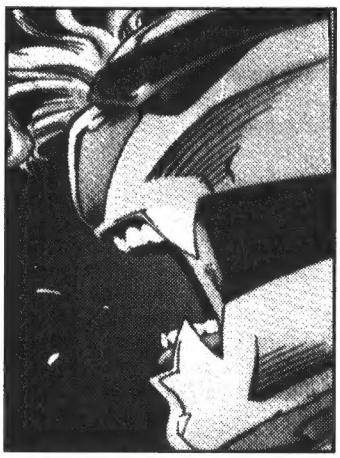
Rotsler, Robert Silverberg, and Bill Warren.

A number of companies immediately responded to calls of aid, Diamond Distributors setting up an art auction with Valiant Comics and various Valiant creators. Donations of limited edition and premium books came from Valiant, Marvel, Defiant, DC, Image, Dark Horse, and Malibu, for sale with the proceeds going to help retailers whose stores were damaged by the earthquake.

★★★U.S. NEWSBRIEF



AXIS COMICS

Axis resolicit *Tribe #s 3 & 4*, the latter including an introduction by Peter David, and launches 3 new comics: *B.E.A.S.T.I.E.S. #1* by Javier (*Ghost Rider*) Saltares, *Dethgrip #1* by Beau Smith (of *The G.R.I.P.*), Jim Callahan & Tim Dzon, and *W #1* by Brian McDonald & Brian O'Connell, the latter created by Todd Johnson of *Tribe* and featuring a pin-up by Larry Stroman.

CALIBER PRESS

Caliber Press have signed a deal with Toys 'R' Us and Kay Bee Toys to stock toys based on a new universe of characters known as Big Bang. *Big Bang #1* mixes three eras of superheroes.

Negative Burn #10 continues Alan Moore's songbook with art by Richard Case, plus stories by Philip Hester, Brian Bolland, Doug Wheeler, Ken Meyer Jr and sketchbook samples of P. Craig Russell.

DARK HORSE

Continuing their programme of new releases, Dark Horse have *Madman Comics #1* released in April, an all new bi-monthly by Michael Allred which begins with a 6-page introductory story to explain much of what has gone before. The main story concerns a crashlanding aliens and mysterious elements in the sewers of Snap City.

Barb Wire spins off from the Comics' Greatest Worlds series into her own title, still set in the grimy industrial city of Steel Harbor, with Machine, Motorhead and Wolf Gang on hand as she battles an assassin known only as Deathcard.

Star Wars: Droids is a 6-issue mini-series starring See-Threepio and Artoo-Detoo from the movies and their adventures in the Kalarbo system, previously seen in *Dark Horse Comics #s 17-19.*

Judah the Hammer returns in *Hammer of God: Butch*, a 3-issue series by Mike Baron & Shea Anton Pensa. Judah (from *Nexus*) decides to seek his long-lost cousin Butch, a member of the secret Gucci Assassins. To infiltrate their secret home planet, Judah joins the Guccis as a recruit.

Judah also appears in *Dark Horse Presents #84* alongside the conclusion of stories by Eddie Campbell, Robert Boyd & Solano Lopez, plus a one-off by Lucy Swan illustrated by Bryan Talbot.

Reprinted from the pages of *Cheval Noir* where it was translated from the original French, *Coutoo* is a *policier*

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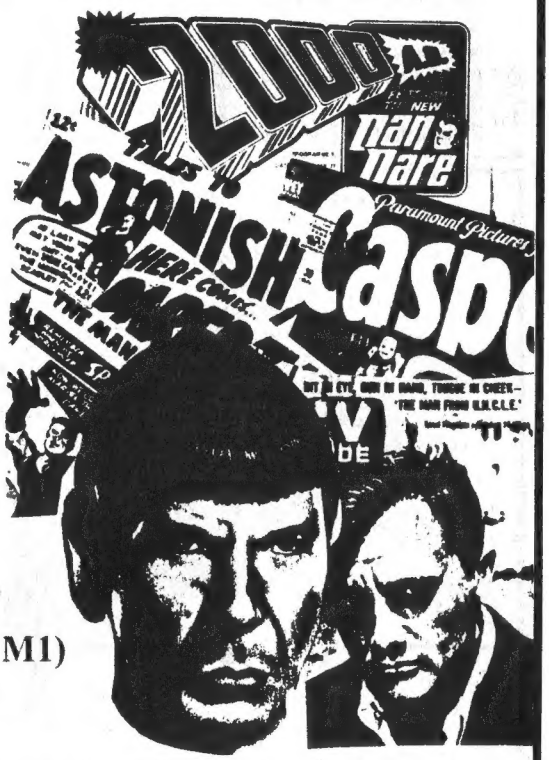

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written and illustrated by Andreas following Lieutenant Joe Kraft's search for the truth behind the murder of Coutoo, a mystery once thought solved by Joe's father, Carl. Armed with new evidence, Joe believes Coutoo's supposed killer, himself dead, may have been innocent.

Medal of Honor is a 32-page one-shot featuring two true-life stories of based on the stories of two US Congressional Medal of Honor winners, told here by Doug Murray, with art by Joe Kubert and Steven Lieber.

Also on the battlefront, *Harvey Kurtzman's New Two-Fisted Tales Special*, a 48-pager edited by the late Kurtzman.

DEFIANT

Dan Chichester joins artist Adam Pollina as writer on *Charlemagne #1* which debuts this month, replacing the previously announced Phil Nutman.

Dogs of War debuts in April by Art Holcomb & Gray in which Shooter and Ironhead abandon the war on Plasm and become vigilantes on Earth.

HARRIS COMICS

Vampirella returns in *Vengeance of Vampirella #1* by Tom Sniegoski & artist Buzz, the first issue graced by a wraparound cover by Joe Quesada & Jimmy Palmiotti. The *Vampirella* trade paperback collects the first four issues of the previous series which pitches her against Dracula, 102-pages priced a very reasonable $5.95.

IMAGE

Three of Extreme Studios titles will jump to issue #25 in May, and follow the actual storyline planned for #25! An extreme (no pun intended) form of getting a title out early. *Bloodstrike #25*, *Brigade #25* and *Supreme #25* will see Battlestone as the leader of Youngblood, Chapel a Hellspawn, and Supreme as evil. The numbering of the series reverts to normal in June, and #25 will be skipped when it eventually comes around. More news in *CW #127*, next month.

Extreme are, meanwhile, also sponsoring a new game show on MTV - *Trashed*, in which contestants destroy some cherished childhood possessions - and continuing their programme of full-colour advertising in mass market magazines such as *Entertainment Weekly* and *Premiere*. Rob Liefeld will be back with *Youngblood* in May, although when *Supreme #9* and *Bloodstrike #7* appeared Rob's advertised contributions didn't. Nor did Jim Lee's artwork grace *Deathblow #3*...talking of whom:

Jim Lee will be heading Wildstorm Productions, another sub-group within Image, which will publish *WildC.A.T.S.*, *Stormwatch*, *Deathblow* (now being drawn by Tim Sale and due to go monthly), *Gen-13* and *Kindred*, all of which will carry the Wildstorm logo.

And after three years apart, Chris Claremont and Jim Lee are reforming their classic X-Men partnership to produce *WildC.A.T.S. #10*, shipping in April. The previously unseen Tapestry turns up from the past for a re-match with Zealot, the fate of the WildC.A.T.S. hanging in the balance. Claremont's story runs for three issues and introduces his latest creation, Huntsman.

For April, Extreme conclude the 'Extreme Prejudice' series in *Brigade #9* and *Bloodstrike #10*, and *Newmen* by Eric Stephenson & Jeff Matsuda debuts.

MALIBU

Under the Bravura banner, Peter David & Ernie Colon join forces to pick up the threads of Jim

Starlin's *Dreadstar*, the story picking up from the original series but here concentrating on the adventures of Vanth Dreadstar's daughter, Kalla. Teamed up with her teacher, Papal, she's in search of her long-lost father, who abandoned her twenty years ago. David, a writer on the original series published by First Comics, hopes

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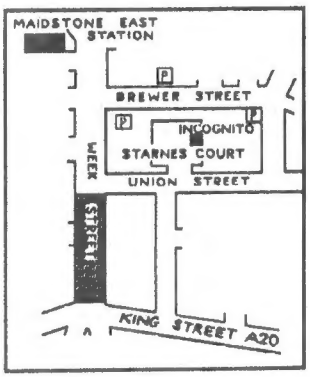


that by introducing a relatively new character alongside some of the old ones the series can pick up new readers without them requiring a comprehensive knowledge of the old *Dreadstar*.

April's Ultraverse Premier is *Elven*, presented as a flip book with *Mantra #10*. Designed by Norm Breyfogle, Elven is Elvia Swenson, heir to some weird elven powers, here drawn by Len Strazewski.

SLAVE LABOR

Second City is a graphic novel collecting the 4 issues of Paul Duncan & Phil Elliot's Harrier series. For more information, read next month's feature on Slave Labor and its Brit Pack creators written, spookily, by Paul Duncan. Yes, truth can be stranger...

VALIANT

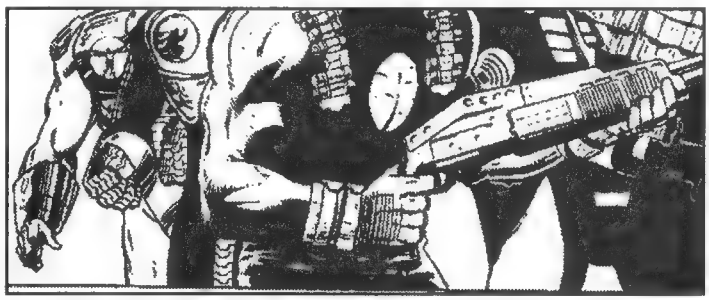
Archer & Armstrong looks like becoming Valiant's first cancellation, with John Hartz recently admitting that the title was in trouble: "We had hoped that Mike Baron would be able to pick it up and carry it through, but...there are problems there. There will be big changes." Although what changes he meant were uncertain at the time but he did admit that "radical surgery" was required. Cut out altogether seems to be the current favourite option.

April sees the release of *Bloodshot Yearbook* by Kevin VanHook & Michael Bair, a love story of sorts: caught in an explosion whilst busting up a drug deal, Bloodshot takes shelter in the home of a beautiful woman who hides a terrible secret.

Toyo Harada, a man of almost limitless wealth and power, is the subject of *Harbinger Files: Harada #1* which will answer all the questions you ever wanted to know about the the telepath. Harada also stars in the 'Bad Omen' crossover running in *Harbinger #31* and *The H.A.R.D. Corps #20*.

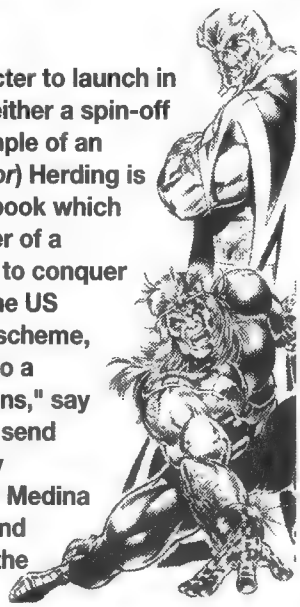
Secret Weapons #11 is the opening shot in a new direction, and you won't see it till you buy it. The emphasis here is on *Secret*: Bloodshot will be leading a team of inexperienced operatives into the dangerous world of superheroics. This issue ships in a brown envelope. Joe Rubinstein joins as inker over Peter Grau's pencils, illustrating Maurice Fontenot's story.

Post-Malev War Magnus and Rai are in for some changes which begin in *Magnus Robot Fighter #38* and *Rai & the Future Force #23*.



MARVEL NEWS

BLACKWULF



Blackwulf is the first all-new character to launch in his own title in years, one who is neither a spin-off from another team or a future example of an established character. Glenn (*Namor*) Herding is the writer of this ongoing monthly book which revolves around the son a the leader of a genetically-unstable race who plan to conquer humanity. When Blackwulf warns the US government of his father's sinister scheme, he falls out of favour "which leads to a series of mind-blowing repercussions," say Marvel. "What will happen next will send readers reeling." And quite possibly unstabilise them, genetically. Angel Medina of *Warlock and the Infinity Watch* and *Cosmic Powers* is the penciller for the series, which debuts on April 12.

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MARVEL ROUND-UP

Ghost Rider rides into his 50th issue with a die-cut, foil enhanced cover and a new harder-edged storyline which will see him steer clear of supernatural horror and return him to the urban avenger of old. Vengeance is kidnapped by a crimelord named Anton Hellgate who is set to become Ghost Rider's greatest enemy. When he asks John Blaze to join him John reluctantly agrees - but in his absence Blaze's wife is killed and his children disappear. A rift develops between the two, setting the scene for the end of *Spirits of Vengeance* at #23, and setting up *Blaze #1*, which ships May 31. Ian Edginton is the writer...yes another ex-*Comic World* writer (see *CWs passim*). You can catch up with events in the Midnight Sons family in *Midnight Sons Ashcan*, shipping May 3.

More anniversaries than you can shake a hammer at: *Thor #475* features the second coming of Dr Donald Blake and Jane Foster, a new costume, and the final showdown between the Godpack rebels and the bestial New Men, thanks to scribe Roy Thomas who packs it all into 48-pages, wrapped in an especially painted, foil-stamped, embossed cover. Similar treatment is laid on for *Avengers* as it hits #475, with a bound-in poster to boot. Several team members are going to be leaving, and replacements are at hand.

Silver Sable #25 is a silver anniversary, celebrated with a 48-page special, Sable hot on the trail of the father she long-believed dead, but who turns out to be working for the Genesis Coalition.

Conan is being relaunched with the premiere of *Conan the Adventurer* on April 19, a new ongoing monthly that will present never-before-told early sword-swinging Hyborian adventures, starting with the attack on the fort at Venarium which has often been referred to over the years but never fully shown. Pencilled by newcomer Rafael Kayanan, the writer is Roy Thomas who has faithfully adapted the new Conan from stories by his creator, Robert E. Howard, and has done for twenty four years. If you want to see his early tales of the Barbarian, Marvel are also launching, on April 12, *Conan Classics*, the origins of both Conan as a comic character and Barry Windsor-Smith as a classic artist. It all ties into the forthcoming US Conan cartoon series. *Conan the Adventurer #87* has a guest in the shape of Red Sonja. She'll no-doubt also guest in our feature on Conan, next month.

May will see the debut of *Galactic Guardians*, a 4-part limited series wherein the universe is threatened with a mysterious menace of unparalleled proportions. The first strike is against Mainframe's homeworld, Asgard, attacked by Silverback. There's also part two of 'Future History' which chronicles the impact of certain 20th-century heroes upon the 30th Century. It begins in the 48-page celebratory *Guardians of the Galaxy #50* which sports a foil-embossed cover and features the final fate of the Protege at the hands of the Living Tribunal, Eternity and Scathan the Celestial, plus some shocking revelations. 'Future History' concludes in *Guardians of the Galaxy Annual #4*.

Black Cat gets her own 4-issue series when Felicia Hardy is hired by the Morelle Corporation to recover something known only as Chimera (*not* the New Blood hero over at DC). Pulled into a dangerous game of industrial espionage, the Cat faces Cardiac and a variety of new villains. Terry Kavanagh teams up with artists Andrew Wildman & Stephen Baskerville, the first issue shipping May 24.

Force Works #1 is resolicited for May shipping with a pop-up cover. The price pops up to $3.95 from the standard edition's $1.75.

The March *Spider-Man #46* is being resolicited complete with metallic ink cover to launch a new creative team, Howard Mackie & Tom Lyle. It will include a 16-page preview of the forthcoming *X-Men Animated* series and upcoming Spidey storylines, plus a comic-sized animation cel. A different cel will be bagged with all the April Spidey- titles - *Web of Spider-Man #113*, *Amazing Spider-Man #390*, *Spectacular Spider-Man #213*, *Spider-Man Classic #15* plus *Marvel Tales #286*, all of which feature metallic ink covers. The *Amazing Spider-Man Ashcan* will be available to the public on April 5, featuring Spider-Man's origin and profiles of villains, and May will see the release of *Round Robin*, a trade paperback with art by Mark Bagley, who pencilled the March-released Spidey trading cards. *Round Robin* is a 144-page softcover, priced $15.95, written by Al Milgrom and inked by Randy Emberlin which teams up the web-slinger with the Punisher, Nova, Night Thrasher, and Darkhawk.

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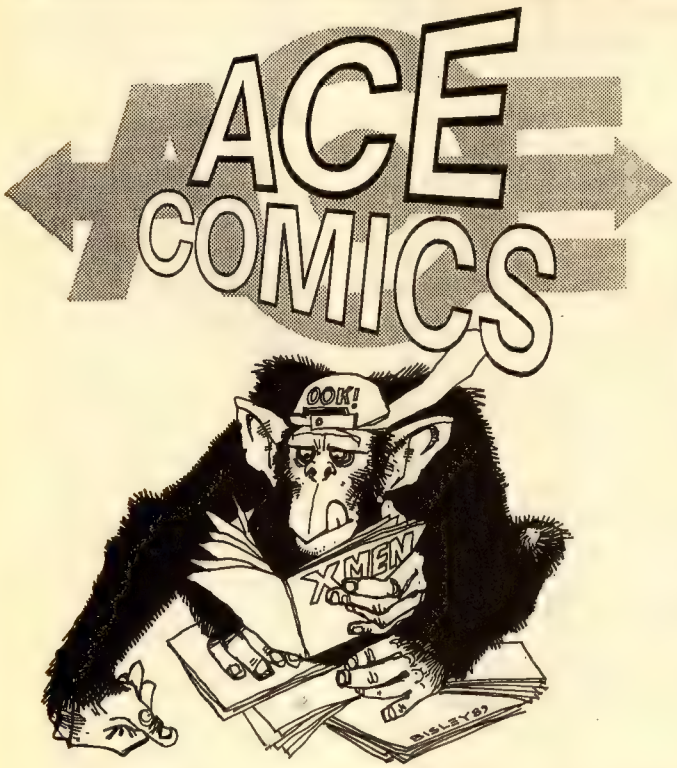

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The *other* wedding of the year: Rick Jones and Marlo tie the knot in *Incredible Hulk #418* with Bruce and Betty as Best Man and Matron of Honour. Join the guests...and what guests there are, because the Impossible Man has duplicated the wedding invitations and invited everybody who is anybody in the Marvel Universe. There's a special die-cut, gatefold cover to enhance the event. April also sees the release of the *Incredible Hulk Ashcan* which is a useful introduction to new readers to current events in Hulk continuity.

The battle between X-Men and X-Factor is gathered together in one 280-page, $24.95 trade paperback - *X-Cutioner's Song* - released April 5.

Wolverine/Typhoid Mary: Typhoid's Kiss is a 64-page reprinting of the Ann Nocenti/ Steve Lightle story from *Marvel Comics Presents #108-116*. Love blooms between Logan and Mary. It doesn't end in a wedding. It does, however, ship on May 24.

Marvel Comics Present #149 will now be a filler issue, and all material slated to appear will be moved one issue on. The new *Marvel Comics #156* will see the debut of 'Vengeance' and 'Hawkeye' 4-part stories.

The 12-part 'Time and Time Again' continues through *Night Thrasher #11*, *Nova #6* and *New Warriors #48* in April, and in issues 12, 7 and 49 respectively in May. (Sorry, the words 'eggs' and 'grandmothers' suddenly spring to mind)

Prison Colony #1 is the first of a 3-part adaptation of the Pacific Western Productions movie starring Ray Liotta set in the near future on a savage island prison from which there is no escape. Roger Salick, Mike Harris & Chris Ivy are the adapters. Meanwhile, somewhere in America, the *Coneheads* decide to take a holiday in France in Marvel's 4-part adaptation of the movie, based on the *Saturday Night Live* series featuring Dan Ackroyd and Jane Curtin.

Quasar #60 is the final issue of the title, bidding Earth farewell. Ah, but it could simply be a prelude to new adventures. Who are the dynamic new Starmasters? Time will tell.

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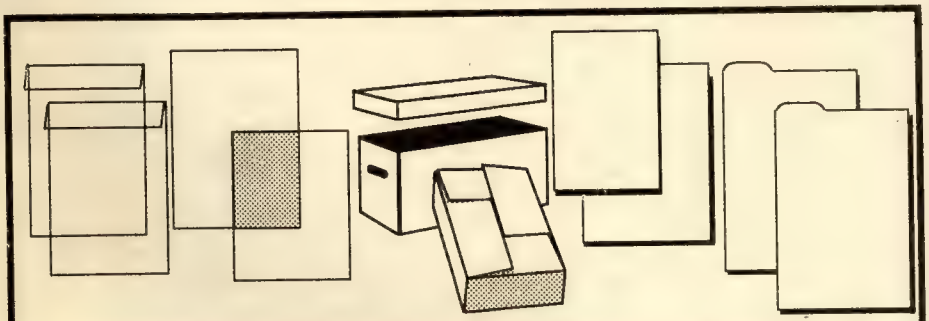

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DC NEWS

WORLDS COLLIDE

The worlds of DC's Metropolis and Milestone's Dakota are linked for the first time in a massive 14-part crossover by a mysterious individual - called Fred.

Fred Bentson is tormented by dreams of being caught naked in public, of being crushed by intense pressure, of being pursued by monsters. But, as disturbing as his dreams are, Fred doesn't imagine that his real problems are far worse: he's living two separate lives. Every day he gets up for work as a mail carrier for the Metropolis Post Office, and when he goes to bed at night, he awakes to go to work as a mail carrier in Dakota city. Unaware of this strange dilemma, he goes to a group of dream-research scientists in Metropolis, *and* approaches Edwin Alva in Dakota, setting up a chain of events which sweeps the superheroes of both worlds into the maelstrom of his reality-warping dreams.

'Worlds Collide' begins in *Superman: The Man of Steel #35* and continues in *Hardware #17*, *Superboy #6*, *Icon #15*, *Steel #6*, *Blood Syndicate #16*, all July cover-dated, along with *Worlds Collide #1*, a 48-page one-shot available in a collector's edition and a standard edition, the former with a wraparound cover, polybagged with vinyl clings, priced $3.95. The story continues in the August dated *Superboy #7*, *Hardware #18*, *The Man of Steel #36*, *Icon #16*, *Steel #7*, *Blood Syndicate #17*, and concludes in *Static #14*. Note that the latter skips a month between the June and August issues.

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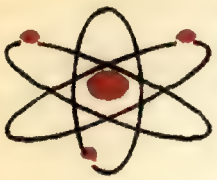

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in *Action #700*, an explosive double-sized issue by Roger Stern, Jackson Guice & Denis Rodier, shipping on May 3. Lex Luthor is deposed by Superman and Lois Lane, and if he falls, he plans to take Metropolis with him. And if the first wave doesn't take out the whole city he has a number of four failsafes which we will see in *Man of Steel #35* (which also introduces Fred, above), *Superman #91*, *Adventures of Superman #514* and the concluding episode, *Action Comics #701*, ranging from nerve gas to a Kryptonian battle suit.

KNIGHTSEND

The Crusade is over. The End is nigh. Bruce is back in Gotham, and what Azrael has done in the name of Batman cannot be ignored. But Azrael's obsession, and the demands of the mysterious System, are too deeply entrenched in Jean Paul's mind for him to step down. After a violent encounter in the Batcave, Bruce has to retrain under his old enemy, Lady Shiva, who has her own ideas of reshaping the Batman; meanwhile, Jean Paul resumes his task as the violent Dark Knight, on the trail of gunrunners who may be tied into the Order of St. Dumas, the secret society which created Azrael.

KnightsEnd begins with three 48-page specials shipping in May: *Batman #509*, *Shadow of the Bat #29* and *Detective Comics #676*, and continues through the pages of *Legends of the Dark Knight #62*, *Robin #8* and *Catwoman #12*. Further chapters, and two special aftermath issues, we'll announce next month.

VERTIGO

The Heart of the Beast is the latest Vertigo hardcover graphic novel (originally called *The Infernal Machine*, which we advance previewed way back in issue #6). Written by Dean Motter and fully painted by Sean Phillips, the story is set against the backdrop of the New York City singles scene where Sandra, a struggling young actress, is drawn to the mysterious Victor, becoming ensnared in a modern-day romance, laced with gothic terror as she discovers Victor's past, haunted by blood and death, through the pages of his journals and his connections with a centuries-old experiment threatens to engulf the two of them. Released on May 24, the 96-page graphic novel is priced $19.95.

The second *Vertigo Visions* volume features Dr Occult, writer David Louapre taking his cue from Neil Gaiman's *Books of Magic*, which revealed Occult and his assistant Rose to be aspects of the same person, to explore questions of gender and sexuality. As Occult's control over his power diminishes, Rose seeks out Occult's oldest enemy, Koth, and the encounter that results creates a wedge which allows the two personalities to split. Occult must find his female aspect or be destroyed. The 64-page one shot, shipping June 7, is drawn by Dan Sweetman.

DC ROUND-UP

Two trade paperbacks to capitalise on DC's TV successes are released in May: *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* gathers together recent encounters between the two from the pages of *Man of Steel #2*, *Superman Annual #1*, *Superman #11*, *Action Comics #655*, *Adventures of Superman #s 445, 462* and *466*, plus stories from *Action #600* and *Superman #9*. In *Batman: The Collected Adventures volume 2*, you'll find issues 7-12 of the acclaimed *Batman Adventures*, based on the animated series.

More Elseworlds Annuals: *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Annual #4* (May 17), set in a 1930s Gotham where D.A. Harvey Dent is warped by an acid attack, and Bruce Wayne may be forced to become the avenger he avoided becoming after the death of his father; in *Steel Annual #1* (May 17) the black slave John Henry Irons forges an armoured suit after witnessing his friends and family suffer at the hands of a tyrannical slave master; Lobo saddles up in *Lobo Annual #2* (May 24) as Lobo takes on everything from the Lone Bastich and Tonto to the Fragnificent Seven; *Legionnaires Annual #1* (May 31) is set in an alternative, totalitarian future society in which a group of knights, known as the Legionnaires, band together; and *Justice League America Annual #8* (Jun 7) in which the League has become no more than a legend, one hundred years after their fall to Lord Faust...unless someone can bring the legend to life.

The countdown towards *Zero Hour* continues in the 3-part 'Reckless Youth' storyline which begins in *Flash #92* in which panicky future-time fugitive Iris West-Allen brings back the youthful Impulse to the 20th century...*Legionnaires #16*, *Valor #21* and *Legion of Superheroes #59* are all preludes to next months six-part 'End of an Era' crossover, tying into *Zero Hour*...as are events in *Hawkman #11*: the Hawkgod speeds towards Earth, the 'Waverider' story in *Showcase '94 #8*, which also includes the secret origin of Scarface & The Ventriloquist, and *Team Titans #22* which reintroduces the New Blood hero, Chimera, *The Darkstars #22* where Troy is offered the power of a Darkstar

Christopher Priest begins a two-part guest writer slot in *Wonder Woman #88*...Nigel Dobbyn is the artist for *The Demon #49*...'Judgment Day' concludes through the pages of *Justice League America #90*, *Justice League Task Force #14* and *Justice League International #66*.

★★★BRITISH NEWS★★★

BLACKBALL

Blackball are expanding in May with the release of *Blackball Comics #3* and *Radical Dreamer #0*. The former switches to 32-page, full-colour format and features three stories: 'Mr Monster Vs Trencher' by Keith Giffen & Michael Gilbert, a solo Mr Monster special - a 'reprint' of a 1950s newspaper strip by Jake - plus 'John Pain' by Kev O'Neill in which our hero meets Doc Guillotin, who claims the only good criminal is a headless one.

Radical Dreamer is introduced by writer/artist Mark Wheatley: the dreamer is Max Wrighter, explorer of the new, addictive interactive virtual reality, the Dream Network. It is presented in a new poster format, the last eight pages unfolding into the world's largest comic page. The regular monthly series debuts in June.

BOXTREE

Something for all X-Men fans, the *X-Men Look & Find* book, is coming from Boxtree, priced £3.99. Compiled by Marvel, the book consists of 9 full-colour spreads which contain six essential items which have to be found before moving onto the next spread.

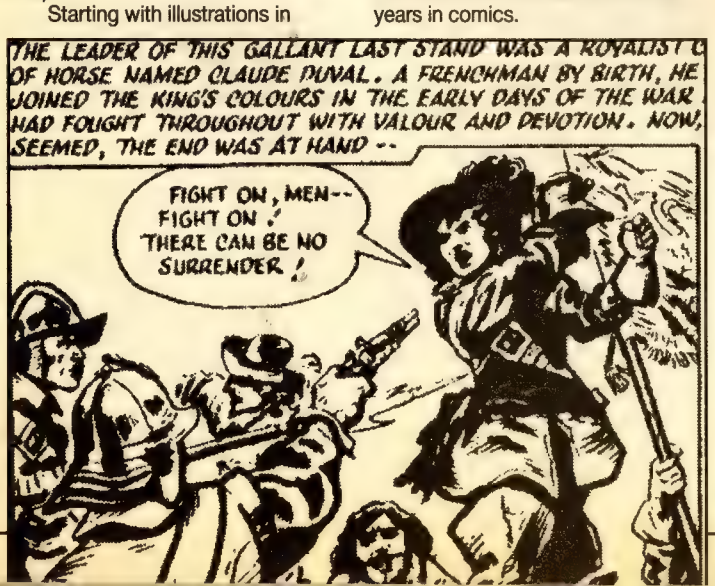
Of more interest to older fans will be the announcement that Boxtree are producing a series of reprint graphic novels, starting in May with *Star Wars: Dark Empire*, *RoboCop: Prime Suspect*, *Necroscope*, *Deep Space 9*, *Wolverine* and *X-Men/Ghost Rider*, all priced £6.99. More news shortly.

FRED HOLMES

One of the many unsung heroes of comics who anonymously helped create the thriving British industry of the fifties and sixties, Frederick Thomas Holmes died in January 1994. Born in 1906 in Linsdale, Fred had a lifelong love for art, even retaining childhood sketches he had drawn during the Great War. He suffered with asthma all his life, which led him into freelance work which could be done from home. His first cartoons appeared in The *Meccano Magazine* and *Co-Op Magazine* in the 1920s, before working full-time as an illustrator on the *Birmingham Weekly Post*. He was later given a life-long contract with the publishers Drummonds of Stirling, but the war-time paper shortage led him to unemployment for a year before a chance discovery of an advert from an agency requiring children's book artists. The 'books' turned out to be comics, and Fred began a twenty four year association with Amalgamated Press (later Fleetway/ IPC).

Starting with illustrations in 1952, he was soon applying his vigorous style to 'Claude Duval' in Comet, followed by countless pages for *Thriller Picture Library*, *Sun*, *Lion*, *Tiger*, *Buster*, *Playhour*, and many other titles, his strips including 'Roy of the Rovers', 'Zip Nolan of the Highway Patrol', 'Phantom Force Five', 'Carson's Cubs', and many more. With the collapse of many of Fleetway's comics in 1974, Fred, only a year away from retirement, left the field in disillusionment, contributing only occasionally for another two years, although he could have continued working for D.C. Thomson, having been a regular contributor to *Hotspur*.

In later years he spent his time devoted to his wife, Eva, who had suffered a series of strokes, yet retained a generally happy outlook on life. He loved nature and wildlife, and was a member of the League Against Cruel Sports. In his eighties, Fred was still drawing covers and competition sketches for his local village magazine, a frail and gentle man with fond memories from his years in comics.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OF HORSE NAMED CLAUDE DUVAL. A FRENCHMAN BY BIRTH, HE
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DARK HORSE

Manga Mania #10 should be out as you read this featuring the second episodes of 'The Dirty Pair', who get involved in a hostage drama, and 'Demon' a medieval horror story. Part 10 of 'Akira' is the climax of the storyline seen in the film recently shown on BBC2.

Coming shortly are *Max Overload #2*, the new computer/comic magazine, Dark Horse International's first all-UK comic, *Jurassic Park #10* with a special movie prequel, 'Nedry's Betrayal', and the latest episodes of 'Raptor' and 'Age of Reptiles'.

Aliens #22 has a major competition, your chance to become a Colonial Marine for the day, and the latest episode in the 'Colonial Marines' series. There's a newcomer, part 1 of 'Aliens: Rogue', and chapter 2 of 'Aliens: Alien'.

HAP

Rogue's Warriors #1 is scheduled for April, written by HAP owner Darren Smithson & drawn by Pete Dixon, a 25-page story plus four pages of preview material for HAP's second title, *The Amazon*, provisionally scheduled for July, and due to also include a back-up strip, 'MageWorks'. *Rogue's Warriors* is an ongoing title told in 12-issue story arcs and will carry a '15' age badge due to some adult themes and situations. Future titles will include *Parallel Minds* in the autumn.

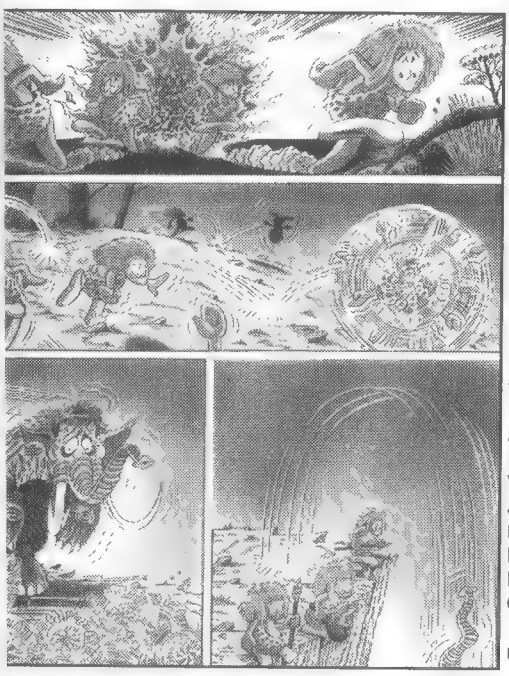
TAKE IT TO THE MAX

STEPHEN JEWELL TALKS TO DARK HORSE INTERNATIONAL ABOUT THEIR NEW LICENSED COMPUTER COMIC, MAX OVERLOAD

There's definately something infectious about computer games. Dark Horse International Editor Dick Hansom wasn't really interested in them until deciding to launch the comic book equivalent of gameboy - **Max Overload** - but has apparently developed quite an itchy trigger finger since which is hardly surprising. I've known more than one artist who spent their day slugging it out with **Street Fighter II** and **Super Mario** when they should have been shackled to the drawing board.

Max Overload isn't the first British publication to blend comics and games. Fleetway's **Sonic the Comic** was first but **Max Overload** is a more sphisticated, ambitious effort to appeal to a teenage/young adult range rather than just a juvenile market. Dark Horse International's first wholly originated title grew out of a recognition that the Britsh newstand market is totally different to the American Direct Sales arena. A title like Dark Horse's biggest seller, **Star Wars** doesn't sell a third of what it would in the U.S. in this country. However, Dark Horse International have already shown an astute awareness of the British market with their hugely popular **Aliens** title. **Aliens** cleverly mixes features with comics which means that rabid **Aliens** fans buy it for the exclusive scoops as much as the strips. **Max Overload** will take a similar tack and will be racked at your local Smiths with computer magazines rather than comics. Hansom has brought on board the vastly experienced Amaya Lopez as Features Editor and readers will be drawn in by the handy playing tips and reviews before savouring the comics.

Max Overload first came about after Hansom was approached by Jane Ritson, who acts as an agent for numerous software producers. "She felt that some of the characters had great potential for comics incarnations and that Dark Horse was the company to do it so we worked up some ideas and put them to her" Ritson was impressed by what she saw and **Max Overload** was up and running. The games featured are all owned by individual software companies and individuals unlike the corporately owned characters of **Sonic**. As a result, Dark Horse have worked more directly with the actual creators of the games and have got much closer to what they wanted. Hansom has even gone as far as to visit **Toejam & Earl** creators, Mark Vorsenger and Grag Johnson in San Fransisco on the way back from the last San Diego Comics Convention.



Hansom also made the somewhat bold decision to go with the more eclectic, humour oriented characters rather than the more action packed products although a more mainstream companion title featuring such properties is planned for later in the year. **Max Overload** recognises that you have to think fast when gaming and so doesn't make the mistake of writing down to its audience or using bargain bin talent. As much care as possible has been put into the art, writing and production values. Hansom wants **Max Overload** to rival the sort of material produced in France or even English comics during the '50s and '60s. "One of my personal beliefs is that the reason why we don't sustain an older comic readership in this country is purely because editorally comics are not good enough and when people get to a certain age they feel that comics are crap."

Max Overload taps into the universal recognition of cartoon style characters like **Ren & Stimpy, The Simpsons** and **Beavis and Butthead**, whose enormous commercial clout absolutely wipes the floor with the likes of **Judge Dredd** and **Lobo**. The general public curiously seem to accept cartooning far easier than comic fans, who have become bogged down with the so-called "realism" of 2000 A.D. and American mainstream comics. Hansom recalls watching an episode of **The Simpsons** with his 78 year old grandfather and 3 year old nephew. All couldn't stop laughing which proves how humour is universal and can cross generations.

Hansom honestly admits to a certain amount of nepotism when it came to handing out the writing assignments and even edits his own work. He has taken on the daunting task of scripting the hugely popular **Lemmings** for artist Graham Manley. He has his work cut out for him. "It was difficult writing stories where the characters have no intelligence and don't talk to each other." Hansom's task was complicated by the need not to do anything which would conflict with the planned animated American television series. "We tried to capture the most important part of the game. You play it not to destroy Lemmings but to save them as they constantly keep trying to kill themselves." Hansom was presented with an interesting storytelling challenge as no actual characters have been developed past the computer screen. He was keen to place **Lemmings** in the real world since he felt that he could get more humour out of relating them to everyday events.

When it came to finding a team for the terminally hip **Toejam & Earl**, Hansom knew instantly that it had to be Anne Caulfield and Woodrow Phoenix. Caulfield hasn't written comics before scripting half of the TV **Avengers** series **Steed and Mrs Peel** for Hansom. However, she is certainly a deft hand when it comes to comedy, having written many television scrips for Lenny Henry. Phoenix, meanwhile, has been floating around the comics scene for some time and has drawn

CONTINUED PAGE 26

DON'T GET CAUGHT!

PHIL HALL WONDERS JUST WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

BANG!

To grab people's attention you have to intrigue, to impress and to instantly establish yourself. If you don't do that, you've lost your chance, you've missed your launch window, and there's little point in continuing.

I lost the original manuscript for this issue's Don't Get Caught. I sat down at my PC (that's personal computer for all you PC people out there) to type it up and send it to Steve. Could I find it, not a chance. I searched my office, the house, the dogs' beds and finally gave up. I usually plan Don't Get Caught throughout the month preceeding deadline day, this month had to be different. All I could remember about the original column was that it started "Comic fans are a strange breed..." and on retrospect, it said very little and most of all it didn't reach out and grab you. So I scrapped the original completely, even if it turns up it's loss could be construed as divine intervention.

(A little digression if I am permitted; a couple of years ago when I was a struggling comic shop owner and a slightly outspoken critic of the faults of the industry, I used to write long whinging articles and submit them to whoever cared to publish them. I had a clapped out old Amstrad word processor, which served its purpose, just. I christened it *The Word Processor of God*, chiefly because it crashed everytime I tried to print something that would eventually, possibly get me into a lot of trouble. Whatever Gremlin saved my bacon then, may still be watching over me.)

I like to think that my opening statements add a little gravity to what was designed to be a predominently light-hearted column, I also like to think they impress enough to keep you reading through to the end.

So I was left with an impending deadline and nothing to write about. I then realised just how similar elements of my predicament was with the comics publishing industry. The First impressions element. If a publisher doesn't cut the ice within its first 3 launches, then they are fighting a losing battle. First impressions, you see, are vital. If your one of the established companies, Marvel or DC, you don't have to worry, you can rest on your laurels, you can throw enough shit and never have to really worry if none of it sticks.

The nineties are ripe for new publishers. The successful; Valiant, Image and the Ultraverse were born. Dark Horse built on the solid foundation they laid in the eighties, that enables them to branch into less profitable and more experimentai projects. Topps, Claypool, Majestic, Triumphant and the rest have been lost in the rush. Innovation, Nemesis and Tundra, bit the big one and Defiant continues to look like a twig in a hurricane.

And of course, there was Marvel UK, the publisher that pretended they were independent and Marvel US let them think it, for a while. With hindsight, it is easy to say "the inevitable happened" but Marvel UK were only one of many publishers that realised the comics industry was rapidly growing up and was playing with the big boys rules. If you didn't make the impact, you were onto a hiding to nothing. So Marvel UK went along with the rest of them, in what soon became a competition to see who could produce the most product over a limited space of time. Neary and Co. looked across the Atlantic and saw its parent company dishing out, in excess of, 10 new titles per month and thought "Hey we can do that."

Hey Marvel UK, I can do that too.

We were then subjected to some of the most uninteresting and long-winded titled comics in the history of the medium. I was waiting for **Alan Davis's The ClanDestine and Motormouth and Killpower vs Death's Head II and the Dark Guard in Battletide 15 - Killfrenzy in Cyberspace.** I would have bought it, just to see how they fit a cover illustration under all those words.

Marvel UK didn't really get its act together until it was too late. The installation of Lou Bank injected a vitalisation into Arundel House, that had been seriously lacking. It seems that Paul Neary's black look was generating black thinking. Lou denies he was the reason that product and marketing started to improve, but I'm not the only person who noticed a new approach, a chopping of the deadwood and a crazy seriousness in their future projects. Any company that can start to use hook lines such as; 'We're lean and hungry and our brains don't fit in our heads' can't be all that bad! The only noticeable addition to Marvel UK's staff roster was Lou Bank. The existing editorial staff didn't just wake up one morning thinking "Hey, I think I'll be radical and start writing interesting copy."

But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Marvel UK got caught, caught by its own belief that as a subsidiary of a **BIG** company, it couldn't fail. I'm not in any position to judge Marvel UK for its failings, but it forgot one of the major principles with new comics. "If the fish doesn't take the bait first time, it will never take it."

After many months of failed attempts, Marvel UK had just started to look promising. Books such as **Alan Davis's The ClanDestine, Loose Cannons, Wild Angels** and, yes, even **Killfrenzy** looked like they were worth a look, and maybe they still will be, they all headed off to Marvel US and the capable control of Tom DeFalco. Other less exciting projects, many of which had already been cancelled, looked destined for comic limbo. With so many creators vying for work, there is little or no alternatives. Marvel UK is planning to relaunch as a newsstand led group of titles, that is, at least, six months away and it is doubtful that it will little more than a reprint house. Many creators face a bleak spring and summer, with unemployment a distinct possibility.

I strongly urge people considering a career in this industry to assess their work accordingly. If you are not something special and/or are not very fast, MacDonald's are always advertising.

But it surely can't be all doom and gloom in the industry at present?

Well, there is very little to shout about, the industry which we all know and love is definitely entering one of its less successful phases. The media has tired of comics again, the speculator market has all but died and comic sales have dropped considerably from the all-time highs we have seen in recent years. An example: **The Incredible Hulk** had an average print run of 350,000 during the Dale Keown/revamp period. The issue that shipped in December 1993, issue 414 had a print run of 130,000. The quality hasn't dropped that much and the current team are actually pushing the emerald one back into the top fifty selling titles.

Malibu appears to be an exception to the rule. They achieved their first big successes as Malibu Comics with **Dinosaurs For Hire** and then the licensed **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine**. This was followed by the Ultraverse, which has firmly established itself as a solid core of titles with the release of **Rune** and the **Breakthru** crossover. Now Bravura has burst on the scene, and although I had reservations about the "so-called" star line-up, the showing of **Breed** has convinced me that along with Legend, the Dark Horse imprint, we might see some viable alternatives to the shallow produce that Image turn out.

So, I will not leave you this month on a low, nothing to shout about mood. Instead I'll advise you to pick up pre-**Breakthru** Ultraverse titles and store them away for a rainy day. I'll advise you to dabble a little in Bravura and Legends, being careful to determine that the dabble of your fancy is'nt over-ordered. I also strongly advise you to ***read*** titles that interest you, rather than mylar them and shove them in a safety-deposit box.

Over the next few months, I believe the trend will be for strong storylines and complimentary art. Now that the speculators are being frightened away, those that remain are the true comics readers and once again we will see comics rise in value because of the content, and not because of the artist, flashy cover gimmick or token death.

Next month: I really will look at some of the comics which you should and should not be reading and saving. ***(Phil Hall, writer of Don't Get Caught and copy editor at Comics International, would like to apologise for his blatant rip-off of Peter David, but he's always wanted to do it!)***

CW

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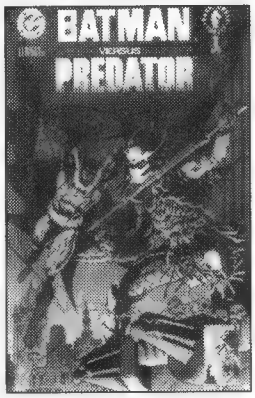
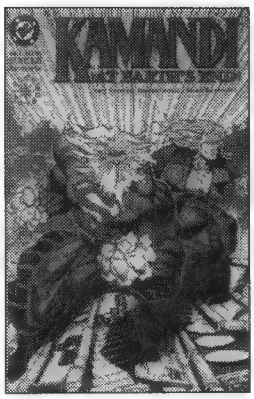


Batman Vs Predator from 1991, DC & Dark Horse . Story Dave Gibbons: Art, Andy & Adam Kubert: Recommended



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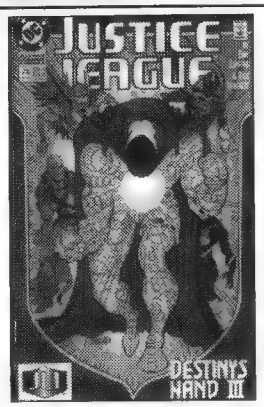

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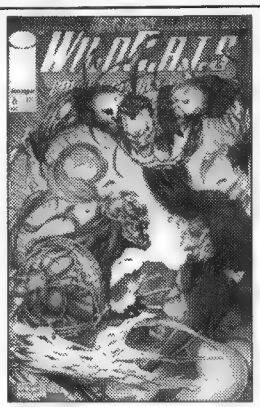

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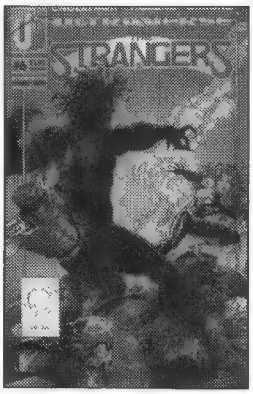

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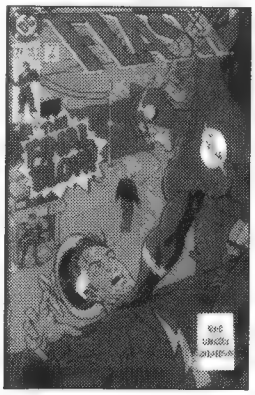

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The latest set of ravings in Direct Market come from ***Richard Emms*** *of* ***Chaos City Comics*** *with additional grammar changes by those nice people at CW!*

This industry is heading for disaster!

It's about time that everyone related to it took one big, hard look at it in detail.

Product, now that's a word I haven't used to explain comics and their contents, but that's all it is. How many companies have shown their faces in an overcrowded market in the last year? Lots!

Shooters' Valiant has become Shooters' Defiant. Continuity has appeared once again with most of its titles shipping late or resolicited. Image has shown what publishing is NOT about, and Valiant has been blown away by yet another Five-Minute Wonder, Ultraverse. I was talking to a colleague of mine the other day about this industry. He said to me, "Rich, what do you think is the most important thing about a comic?" I replied, "Well, it's got to be the time and effort that is put into each individual issue!" He answered with an angry "What about the characters?" and went on to say, "If I asked you to tell me something important about Spawn, what would you say?" I replied "Todd McFarlane of course". He asked, "Something related to X-men?" and I replied "Wolverine".

You see, that's the difference. We all know McFarlane by his fantastic artwork, but does that really sell a comic to a reader? No! On the other hand Wolverine's artists have changed a thousand times over the last ten years – but the comic still sells to those readers who love its continuity and nostalgia.

How long do you the reader/collector/investor or shop owner think that Spawn will exist with McFarlane producing the artwork, story, or both for it? He's already left Spiderman at issue 16 and instantly sales dropped for such a great character. I hope he proves me wrong. Let's hope that Spawn is the next Cerebus!

Distribution, that something different. I'd like to compliment Diamond for their great new policy which will help the retailer. For all of you who'd like to know the deal, any comics now shipping 30 or more days late can be returned for credit. This means:

a) The product, if late would have a much shorter shelf life so you as a customer would have to pick it up there and then rather than wait for the last few copies an risk them being sent back.

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c) If the reader loses interest in a title because it's late, and subsequently cancels it from their standing order list, the retailer doesn't end up with loads of dead stock, so hopefully everything that is ordered and comes out on time will sell out and make everybody in the retail trade a decent amount of money!

I did want to talk about trading cards and other exciting things, but Corinne, who has feverishly translated my abysmal handwriting has decided there's not enough room for the other five pages (*C'mon Rich, enough's enough!*) so I'll wrap up now and let you go and read something more interesting.

Cheers, Richard
Chaos City – St Albans
and Stevenage.

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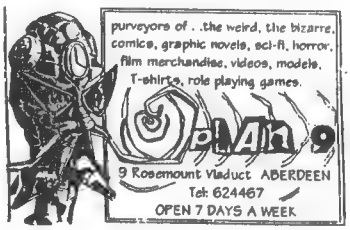
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TAKE IT TO THE MAX
CONTINUED

Tundra U.K's updated **Sherlock Holmes** and **The Sumo Family** in Dark Horse's **Manga Mania**. He has also recently written and drawn **Ecco the Dolphin** for **Sonic the Comic** so he better watch out that he doesn't get a bad case of joystick thumb. **Toejam & Earl** is the complete opposite of **Lemmings** as it features two very strong protagonists and was probably the strip where Dark Horse worked most closely with the game's creators. There's a whole wealth of characters to be drawn upon not to mention cool pop culture references.

Dark Horse International's Australian Deputy Editor Cefn Ridout was set the task of scripting stone age sensation **Chuck Rock. Chuck Rock** was developed by British company Core Designs and has so far spawned two games - **CHUCK ROCK** and **Son of Chuck Rock**. Hansom likens Chuck more to **The Simpsons** than its cave-dwelling counterparts, **The Flintstones**. "In the first game Chuck's wife is kidnapped and his son is kidnapped in the second and he has to rescue them. In the strip, we came up with the idea that Chuck Rock's fridge gets kidnapped." **Max Overload** provides a valuable outlet for more cartoony style artists, who would otherwise be overlooked. **Chuck Rock** is illustrated by David Lyttleton, who is best known for drawing the Gollancz graphic novel **King Klang Klatch** and various strips in the late **Red Dwarf Smegazine**. Hansom welcomed the opportunity to employ the likes of Lyttleton, who he could hardly have assigned to **Aliens**.

There was some risk involved in choosing to adapt **Greendog** since it isn't as well known as the others. However, Hansom decided to go with it since Greendog and his dog, Fetch are such good characters. Greendog is a spaced-out surfer dude, who bums around search for the ultimate wave until he lucks upon a mystical pendant which sends any animals in his vicinity absolutely crazy. He then has to brave killer crabs and other beserker beasts as he sets out to lift the curse by finding the scattered-to-the-ends-of-the-Earth fragments of the Ancient NNG Surfboard. At the writing helm is Ian Carney, whose previous credits include the wry **Randy the Skeleton** in **Inkling** and **Cheval Noir** while the pictures are provided by Ilya of **Skidmarks** fame. With lots of L.A. speak and media politics, Greendog is like **Bill and Ted** crossed with the **M.T.V. Beach Party**.

The first issue of **Max Overload** has already arrived complete with LEMMINGS stickers for your lunchbox or fridge door. The second is due March 22nd. Hansom is currently anxiously awaiting the public response to **Max Overload** but advance orders have so far been very encouraging. So, dash out and buy **Max Overload** if only to find out how to deal with killer plants or avoid blowing up blockers!

HOW DO YOU LIKE 'ER, CHUCKY BABY? 100 MILES ON THE CLOCK AND NO DENT YET!
MICK JAGGER, FAILED INDUSTRIALIST AND EVOLUTIONARILY-CHALLENGED BADASS LAST WE HEARD, ME AND HIS ORIGINAL B10 - BIODEGRADABLE ROBOT™ HAD BEEN KNOCKED INTO ORBIT BY THE TYKE IN THE T-REX. SEEMS HE'S GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE ROCK FAM-
WILL YOU SHADDUP !!
YOU GOT IT !
FANCY A TEST DRIVE?
YEEOWWW!
WHERE'S OPHELIA, YOU LITTLE TORMENT?

Alive and Kickin'

ROY OF THE ROVERS: BRINGING THE FOOTBALL COMIC UP TO DATE
"AN' AH SAW OVER A HUNDRED OF THE HUNDRED AND FIFTY 'E PLAYED AFTER THAT."

PULLED BACK FROM THE DEAD, ROY OF THE ROVERS IS MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER FACE-LIFTED REVAMP. EIGHT MONTHS ON, ROY 'ROCKY' RACE JUNIOR CONTINUES TO PULL IN THE CROWDS WITH NEW STORYLINES, NEW ARTISTS AND A NEW ATTITUDE

"I've never bought this argument that because kids have got videos to watch and computer games to play they're not interested in comics any more. I don't see it borne out in Japan or the States. I do feel that the way forward is to do British comics for a British audience - and do them for a 1990s audience."

Stuart Green has been an openly outspoken commentator on the British comics scene for many years, his opinion finding a place in the pages of *Speakeasy*, which he briefly edited in 1990-91 for John Brown before it was canned to make way for *Blast!*, one of a spate of 'adult' British comics that were born - and died - at the turn of the decade.

"From the first moment I came into British comics, working on *Speakeasy* out of the back of Acme Comic Shop, I couldn't understand why everybody's efforts were so directed at America. Countless companies have come and gone, countless creators come and gone trying to get their comics accepted in America whilst ignoring the British market; the British comic industry has been shrinking since the seventies and has continued to shrink to this day.

"Everybody in Britain thought the solution was to do adult comics, but it seems to me that they'd forgotten the roots of British comics which were the anthologies and a pretty young audience. I look at *2000AD* and think it's a stunning example to anybody who wants to create a comic for the British market. It's very traditional in one way: - it's an anthology comic - but it throws the mould in so many different ways. Before *2000AD* all British anthology comics did stories that ran to four pages max, whatever they could get an artist to do in a week, and it was done on a week-to-week basis. Pat Mills had a year to put *2000AD* together and the biggest innovation, and the one that's most overlooked, is that the page count for each story was put up to an average of 7 pages which allowed artists and writers to stretch the boundaries - the characters were a little more in-depth and the scenarios a little more complicated, and the stories therefore gave the artists some real meat.

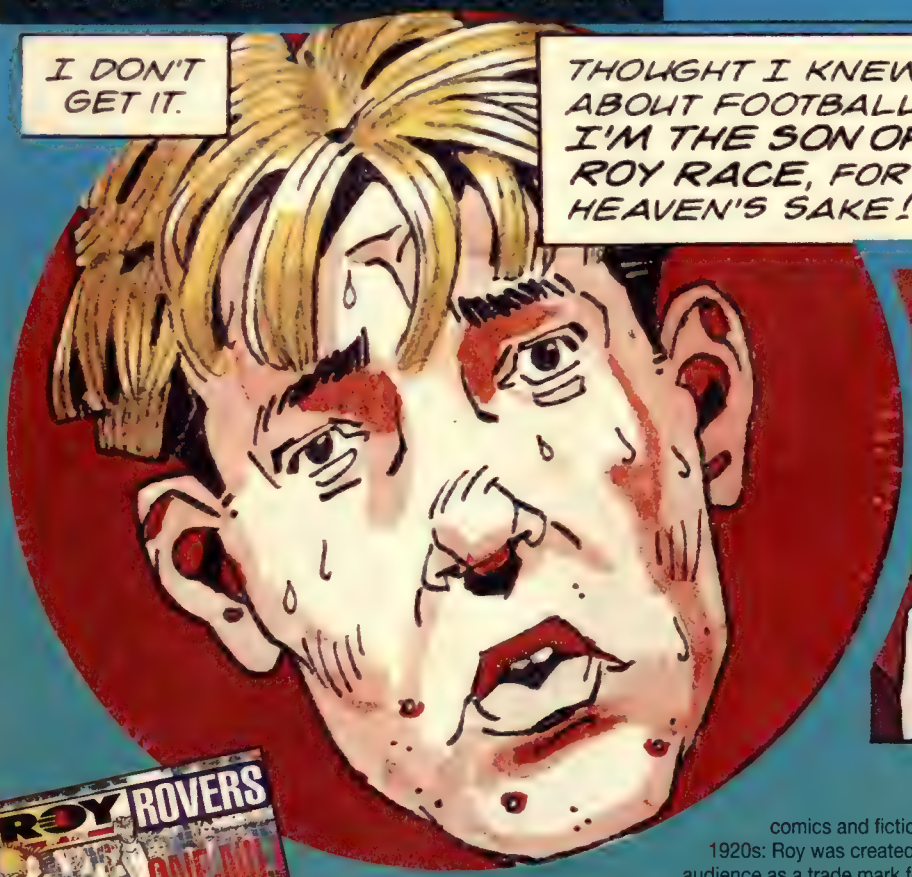
"*2000AD* should have been used as a model for all comics, but, looking back, around the same time D.C. Thomsons, who had been IPC's main rival for all those years and the two were always in very intense competition, spurring each other on to create new titles - around that time Thomsons decided to pack it in. So *2000AD* has never really had any serious rivals since 1977 and the editorial model it introduced has never been followed.

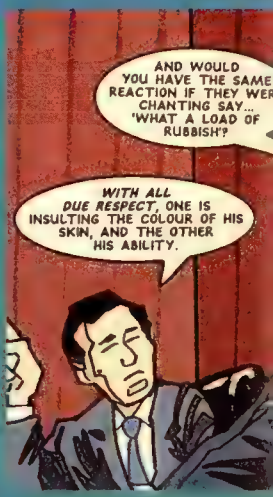
"In America Marvel and DC have looked at their monthly titles continually and kept them contemporary by bringing in new artists and new writers, and kept it relevant to their audience.

"That's what I'm doing with *Roy of the Rovers*: bringing the football comic up to date in the same way that *2000AD* did the action/adventure comic. The stories will be 6 or 8 pages each issue and there'll be a balance between action and human drama. Where most comics are either one or the other, *2000AD* has always managed this balance between black humour and body count."

HUMAN DRAMA

Putting British comics to rights is the day-dream of many fans who remember the halcyon days of the 1960s and the dire shambles they had become in the early 1970s. The success of *Action* in the mid-seventies, even when it was ham-strung by bad publicity and eventually had the life strangled out of it, and the steady growth of the cult of *2000AD*, was ignored in new launches like *Tornado* and *Speed* which returned to the 1960s model of comics, and quickly died. Ignoring the new formula, and the new generation of fans, publishers were turning off their audience and all but closed the door on the comic industry.




AND WOULD YOU HAVE THE SAME REACTION IF THEY WERE CHANTING SAY... 'WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH'?
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, ONE IS INSULTING THE COLOUR OF HIS SKIN, AND THE OTHER HIS ABILITY.

onlooker glances back, looking straight into the eyes of the reader, and says: "Nor do I! SOMETHING'S WRONG...!"

The tail-rotor gearbox breaks up, the drive shaft shot to hell, and Roy may as well be trying to fly a slab of concrete.

Melchester mourns its greatest son.

In the 1980s they could only see that sales had dropped through the floor - but somehow comics were gaining a lot of media attention. The result comics aimed at *Guardian* readers. Everybody was talking comics...but nobody was buying them.

"*Crisis* had tried contemporary urban-reality type stuff, but there wasn't a very strict editorial theme there. I think *Crisis* suffered from the fact that it never really had a direction. Now, you tell people it's a football comic and it really focuses the mind. We can do a story on racism, which we've been doing over the past few months, and its directly tied into the characters whose function doesn't depend solely on a single storyline, and because it's a situation that's right there in the mainstream of our culture, you can deal with these big issues on a simple day-to-day level which everybody understands.

"Football is a huge sub-culture of its own. It means so much to so many people. Graham Taylor was as hated as John Major; in fact more people care about who's the manager of England than they do who's the Prime Minister! And by the same token, Roy Race is Britain's most famous and widely known character."

FOOTBALL IS A HUGE SUB-CULTURE OF ITS OWN

And one of the few who had remained even remotely contemporary. When he was created forty years ago as the cover star for the pages of the new comic, *Tiger*, his creators were already thinking about using Racey to break the constraints that had been in place in children's comics and fiction since the 1920s: Roy was created for his 1954 audience as a trade mark for the predominantly sports-orientated paper. Writer Frank S. Pepper, a veteran of sports stories, having created another footballing wizard, Danny of the Dazzlers, for the boys' paper *Champion*, was teamed up with then newcomer, Joe Colquhoun (many years later to draw the best comic strip of the seventies, 'Charley's War') to flesh out Roy and make him real in the minds of his young readers.

On the field for the first issue, Roy (of course) scored a last-minute winner for Milston Youth Club, his tireless performance and leadership bringing him to the attention of a talent spotter for first division Melchester Rovers, rising to Captain the team in four years. Roy's innovation was that he had a life off-field as well as on-field, *Tiger*'s editors (probably nervously) allowing him a girlfriend whom he eventually married. Winning the League Championship and European Cup over the years were sidelights to his headline-grabbing marriage in 1976, the birth of the twins, Roy Junior and Mel in 1977, and the six-months he spent out of action after being shot by former Melchester apprentice, Elton Blake. In over-the-top soap-opera style, the Rovers' grounds were torn apart by an Earthquake, the team was split by scandal, and - in one of the most tragic storylines ever dreamed up for a comic - blown up by terrorists whilst on tour. These guys didn't miraculously reappear a year later. Roy didn't wake up in the shower - he woke from nightmares, sweating and screaming.

And as his crowd-pulling days seemed to be drawing to a close, Fleetway performed the ultimate soap-dish stunt: they finished him off.

6.59 P.M. A running-track adjacent to the Weltech Athletic pitch...

A worried crowd gathers below as Roy's helicopter stutters into view. Aghast, one of the crowd gasps "LISTEN! I don't like the sound of those rotors!" An

ROY REBORN

The echoes of Kenneth Wolstonhome's haunting line, 'They think it's all over', could have been written for Roy. But this is the never-ending story, and Roy's rebirth was predicted from the first moments after his crash. How he returned to the field has its roots in another magazine entirely: *Glory, Glory*, a weekly football comic that was to be Tundra Publishing's only attack on the British newsstand market. Dreamed up by Stuart while he was editing the ill-fated *Blast!* for John Brown, the paper seemed to have found a home which would support it at Tundra, only to be cancelled at the last minute when somebody actually looked at what Tundra were spending, at how many comics Tundra had produced for that money, and decided that the figures weren't adding up to a successful company.

Glory, Glory moved to Fleetway who had the experience with football comics - they were Roy's publishers, after all - and a new contract worked out with co-editors Stuart Green and Frank Plowright. "Jon Davidge and Chris Power were very confident that we would go ahead," Stuart recalls, "but *Glory, Glory* was meant to be part of their first package for Egmont," - the Danish company who had recently bought Fleetway from Robert Maxwell. "But Egmont aren't familiar with football comics or the British market, and decided they didn't want it because it didn't fit into their European-wide profile; basically Egmont want titles that they believe are international, and they didn't think they could sell the comic elsewhere. But it seems to me that if you get a football comic right, you could sell it anywhere in the world. Football's a world-wide game: if you want figures, FIFA have more member states than the United Nations. The first thing the former communist countries did after they'd kicked out the despots was invite international teams in to tour; half the

Art © Fleetway Editions

world's population watched the last World Cup final. Football's absolutely everywhere at a professional level.

"Jon and Chris, however, are massive football fans and didn't want to see Roy die, so they persuaded Egmont to give them a bit of money to revamp the title, which is what we've been doing . And it's gone down well, people have gone overboard about what we've done; *The Publisher* reviewed the first issue and said that if we were being produced in France the magazine would be hailed as a major cultural asset, and its artists would win the Legion d'Honneur'."

The review (usually home to publishing jargonese about 'significant newsstand pick-up') has been proved right, with sales "pretty buoyant" in Stuart's decoded opinion. The stories and artwork are very different to the Roy of yesteryear.

"I'm doing a story about racism with Delroy which we're doing in conjunction with the Commission for Racial Equality, part of the Let's Kick Racism Out of Football campaign. It started in December with Delroy," (Paul Delroy Ntende, the 22-year-old Brixton-born forward, just signed for Melchester) "getting a lot of monkey chants at a game. He reacts quite badly to it and gets booked for his troubles and pulled up before the disciplinary tribunal for incitement. The story culminates in April...but I won't give away the ending."

REVOLUTION

The fresh approach to the stories has been only part of the revolution, with new artists being brought in the rejuvenate the dated look of football comics which dates back to Joe Colquhoun's original run in the 1950s. "After I had the idea for *Glory, Glory* I had a rush of ideas, and thought I'd better pick up *Roy of the Rovers* to check it out," says Green, and adds "There was this story called 'Billy's Boots' that I remember reading as a kid, and the story and art style hadn't changed. It looked terribly dated, and for that reason I think sales suffered. But it's not a case of totally changing a winning formula - if you look at what they've done with Superman in the States, he's a very different character to what he was ten years ago, but he remains true to the original approach.

"I just couldn't understand why these strips hadn't changed since I was reading them as a kid, so we looked around for artists who were really into it, and found them."

You couldn't mistake the new Roy for the old. Apart from the story concentrating on Roy 'Rocky' Race Junior, his father looking in from the touchline from his wheelchair, the artwork has rotated between a team of artists, with Robert Davis being the most regular to date, an artist for whom Stuart reserves his highest praise.

"I believe he's one of the most exciting new artists around. It's not like the old days where people just drifted into comics not really caring about them: Robert and the other artists who are working on the magazine really care about football. We were on the phone for two hours yesterday: twenty minutes talking about the strip and an hour forty about how poorly Man United played last Wednesday. I thought I was bad, but Roger would watch football all week if he could."

THE STORY AND ART STYLE HADN'T CHANGED. IT LOOKED TERRIBLY DATED

More recognisable names are those of the Pleece Brothers, who worked on a number of one-offs before Gary Pleece and Sean Longcroft launched 'The Bumblers', "about a really bad Sunday league team. There's another one-off he's doing with [brother] Warren, a sort of sequel to the 'Bovril At the Bridge' strip [in issue one] which is all about Gary's experiences watching Chelsea in the 1980s."

Both Davis and Longcroft came from football fanzines, the whole culture of which grew in the late eighties until you could find fanzines in the shops. "*When Saturday Comes* and *Fever Pitch* and others...there's this incredibly rich culture. And football has had a very negative image in this country which the establishment bends over backwards to portray: that football fans are violent and only go to matches to kick people in. The average fan goes there for a lot of reasons: he's there to enjoy the pure aesthetics of watching football; he's there because the team that he supports represents his community in some way; the team can sometimes represent something to him personally. There's a lot of humour, tragedy and drama involved in that relationship."

It's Roy's anniversary at the beginning of next season, on which subject Stuart remains tight-lipped: "We'll be doing some things that I'm sure will get some coverage" is all he'll say. The media will turn in their stories about final whistles, substitutions and other desperate cliches, "It's a comic of two halves" instead of stating plainly that there are some classic reprints alongside the new material, ""Old Artists Shown the Red Card" instead of praising the new talent, "Action replay" for those backward glances at Roy's past...

Grinding out the cliches is all part and parcel of the media campaign to closet comics firmly in the past, the easy route to not once think *why* Roy can sustain an audience for forty years, outlive fads and fashions, survive death and still attract a new generation of readers. Proof that comics still count.

For that you only need to see that Roy's alive and kicking. CW

CHRIS BACHALO DISCUSSES HIS CAREER THUS FAR WITH PAUL H. BIRCH

If truth be told, when I first saw Chris Bachalo's work I promptly perceived him as yet another stylist who'd be in vogue for a few months then plummet rapidly out of sight. Avoiding his development was a hard task however; people kept telling me how good he was. Chief amongst them, his frequent inking-come-embellishing collaborator, Mark (Bucky) Buckingham. Nevertheless, I held out and refused to succumb to this point of view. That is until about a year ago. Whether I'd wrongly categorised him or he'd simply improved, what I began to notice was a charismatic intelligence at work that was sadly, far too often, lacking in most monthly mainstream comics. While no one looked I wiped the egg from my face.

Were fate to play its hand more precariously this might well have been an obituary, fortunately it is not. Why? Because Bachalo lives out in sunny California, and we'd originally arranged to talk on the 17th January ... the morning after that major earthquake.

"Most of the damage happened 70 miles north of us," he reveals some days later after things have calmed down. "When it woke us we thought it was only a small one so my wife, Helen, and I went back to sleep. But when we put the television on in the morning we discovered what a complete disaster it had been! The past couple of years in between all the riots, fires, trials and these earthquakes it feels like we get a daily dose of disaster."

Me, I'd move, but then my parents hadn't relocated us all down from Canada when I was a kid. What are facts of life to Bachalo remain little pictures on a TV screen to me: often alien, and frightening. At the other end of a phone line Chris Bachalo comes across as a nice guy, it's not meant to typify him in a negative sense. Shy perhaps, or wary of my motives to begin with - which is only natural when the first thing I do is tell him what I thought of his earlier work, then before he can slam the receiver down point out the appreciation factor I have for what he's currently producing. It appears to work for as time passes, what was hesitant laughter ripples forth far more freely from his lips. He's now 28, the age he thought he'd have to be to break into the business.

"I'd started collecting comics when I was about 10 year old, but it wasn't until I was around 16 that I seriously thought about working in comics. I'd been going through high school kind of wandering what I was going to do with myself. I hadn't been drawing that much but enjoyed it, and since I liked comics I put the two together. I got together with a friend who enjoyed writing and we made our own comics throughout high school, then later I took Art in college and university.

"I'd heard all the nightmare stories about getting into comics but actually it was pretty easy. At college I did a project for one of my classes which was a comic, and I sent that out to every publisher I could think of. They all sent me rejection letters, but about 6 months after, DC sent a feeler note out to me asking what I was up to so I sent them a new project I was working on. They called about a week later and asked me if I wanted to try out for *Shade*, which I was ecstatic about! I managed to get the job; then, waiting for Peter Milligan to finish the script, Karen Berger asked me if I'd want to do a fill-in issue of *The*

Death © DC Comics

© DC Comics

"IF I COULD HAVE PICKED ANY BOOK TO WORK ON, THAT WAS IT; IT WAS THIS FANTASY COME TRUE. TO THIS DAY I CONSIDER MYSELF VERY LUCKY"

es

© Marvel Entertainment

Sandman, so that came out first.

"At that time *Sandman* was about a year old, and definitely one of my favourite books. If I could have picked any book to work on, that was it; it was this fantasy come true. To this day I consider myself very lucky because I think there's a lot more people out there that have more talent than I do." Then why had they chosen him?"It's something I've since asked Richard Bruning about, who in a sense discovered me, and he just said there was something different about my approach to storytelling, and that I had a pretty good grasp of all the things I'd need to know," laughing he adds, "To this day I count my blessings!"

And so he began collaborating with a couple of writers a continent away.

"I was flattered because it was this great opportunity. I enjoyed Neil's work, and at the time I had just read Peter's *Skreemer* which I thought was really good, I just couldn't believe that I was going to get to work with him. The whole situation was ironic because I ended up working on the books that I wanted to. I was under the impression that I'd have to work on some small paltry book somewhere before I could get on something that I really wanted to. I just jumped in head first, and it was great because I managed to get to work with the best writing talents around in Peter and Neil."

His four years as regular artist on Shade are soon to conclude however.

"I'm going to finish my run with #50. It's a larger book, 32 pages I think, and I'm going to do 24 of those pages, while Mark's going to draw the other 8." The rumours that writer, Milligan was to bring Shade to its natural conclusion some six issues later are denied by its outgoing artist.

As the body of work Bachalo's produced mounted so has his popularity with the purchasing public. The most noticeable leap being DC/Vertigo's *Death: The High Cost of Living* mini-series.

"I knew at the time that I took the project on, that she was a very popular character, and so I wasn't surprised at all. I knew she would do well" he says of the series' sales and generally receptive critical success, adding, "In fact I thought she might have done better." Three times the direct sales orders of Vertigo's top selling regular book isn't something to be sneezed at? "Yeah, but over here she's very, very popular as a character."

As we all know, if something succeeds there's inevitably a sequel. Fortunately DC's accountants didn't demand that it came out the proceeding month.

"I've scheduled"to start drawing it in August of this year with a release date of January '95. That's basically around the same time as DC released the last one. The working title for it right now is *Death: , The Time of Your Life*, but Neil has yet to come up with a story. I haven't chatted to him of late, but he said the same thing happened with *The High Cost of Living* in that he had a working title before he had a story. I think he's a little trustrated about her right now because he finds her a difficult character to write for in that she has no conflict about her," laughing, "And it's hard to write a story where there's no conflict. But he's busy grinding it out and when it comes down to it he'll figure out something to write about. I'm pretty sure Bucky'll be inking

it, so it'll be the same team. I can't wait to get started on it."

Finishing *Shade*, drawing the first part of *The Children's Crusade*, and the next Death series look set to be the last works he takes on for the Vertigo imprint for some time well into '95 but for the regular DC line there's also the matter of a *Legends of the Dark Knight* story by Jamie Delano.

"I drew it back in April '92, it's been a while! I pencilled it before *Death* as a matter of fact. It's called *Terminus*, and the reason it's taking so long to get out is that Mark Pennington took a real long time to ink it." Only about a year-and-a-half! "I talked to Archie (Goodwin, editor) recently and he said it's tentatively scheduled to come out in July. That was a lot of fun, I'm really proud of it and I'm looking forward to seeing it in print."

Last year saw moves towards cementing a working relationship with Marvel via a strip in *Hulk #400*, "with Peter David, another good writer," some covers, and more relevantly the *Ghost Rider Annual* and *X-Men Unlimited #1*.

"AS FAR AS GHOST RIDER 2099'S CONCERNED IT'S WORKING OUT PRETTY GOOD"

"I'm now working on *Ghost Rider 2099* where I'll be doing breakdowns with Bucky doing finishes. Then on March 1st as soon as I finish my run on *Shade* I have to pick up a new book called *Generation X* for which I'll pretty much be doing full pencils for a while, in fact for as long I can see right now.

"It was last summer when they were thinking about the idea for the 2099 book. Even Skolnick the editor of the *Ghost Rider Annual* really enjoyed the work Bucky and I did, and pretty much courted me from the beginning. I turned it down a few times because I kept telling him I didn't have the time to do it, but eventually he called me and asked if I'd consider doing the breakdowns, so I thought about it and agreed to that end of it.

"Time wise, at this point, I'm having a hard time doing the breakdowns in between having to do my *Shade* work and then coming up with the concept look for *Generation X* which is a group book meaning there's a lot of characters to come up with! I wish there was more time in the day to do all these things, but I'm not going to be able to do a few issues of *Ghost Rider* so I think Bucky's going to drawn those."

Generation X will be a monthly current time line Marvel book intended to be similar in scope to *The New Mutants* back in the '80s.

"It's a new school of mutants and with the noticeable exception of Banshee who's running the school, the White Queen, and Jubilee, the rest of the crew are going to be new. Scott Lobdell's the writer, with Mark and I on art. I believe it's going to be released in September and I'm sure there'll be X-Men in it." Yeah, I'll bet. Was the artist himself a particularly big superhero fan? "I've been known to read them. Having grown up on superheroes I can still enjoy the genre. I was the typical Marvel zombie growing up and collected only them until I was around 18 years old. I've been drawing *Shade* for four years so I think this will be something of a challenge for me which I'm looking forward to so I hope it will be fun."

One assumes that drawing work of a heroic nature isn't quite as simple as its detractors try to make out, after all a wholly different form of choreography is required.

"Yes, that's another challenge. There's quite a few, including the way you pace a story, and the fact that there's a lot more action."

Neither will he be working from full scripts, the method favoured by those writers he's previously collaborated with.

"It was a concern of mine going in, and I expressed this to the writers and editors. The way Marvel alliots their payments are different to DC, and according to what I understand, if the writer does a full script he gets a bigger percentage of the royalties because he's apparently more responsible for playing out the action and that kind of thing, but also I'd rather get a plot and work it out myself. My biggest concern, as far as using plots are concerned, was that I'd always frowned upon the writer having to go back and fit all the word balloons in. You see there's a lot of situations where as a penciller I might be asked to draw a head shot not knowing what was going to be said, so I wouldn't know what the proper expression should be. They sort of reached a compromise where they encouraged the writers to go in and put some dialogue in which means I can get a basic feel for what's going on," laughing, "So now I'll try to fit in those appropriate expressions.

"As far as *Ghost Rider 2099's* concerned it's working out pretty good so far. I haven't seen any of the scripted work yet but Len Kaminski's been putting in a good percentage of the dialogue to the plot and it's been really easy to follow, but it's another adjustment and we have to make."

After concluding his *Shade* activities he'll have plenty of time to get used to these new working methods.

"My wife, Helen, does all my scheduling and she has me mapped out until 1995! And basically there isn't any room for anything else in the next couple of years!" he jokes.

"I've reached a point where I don't worry about getting work because I think there's more than enough work to go round. In fact I think because of the glut in comics market, there's probably not enough good talent to go round; that's

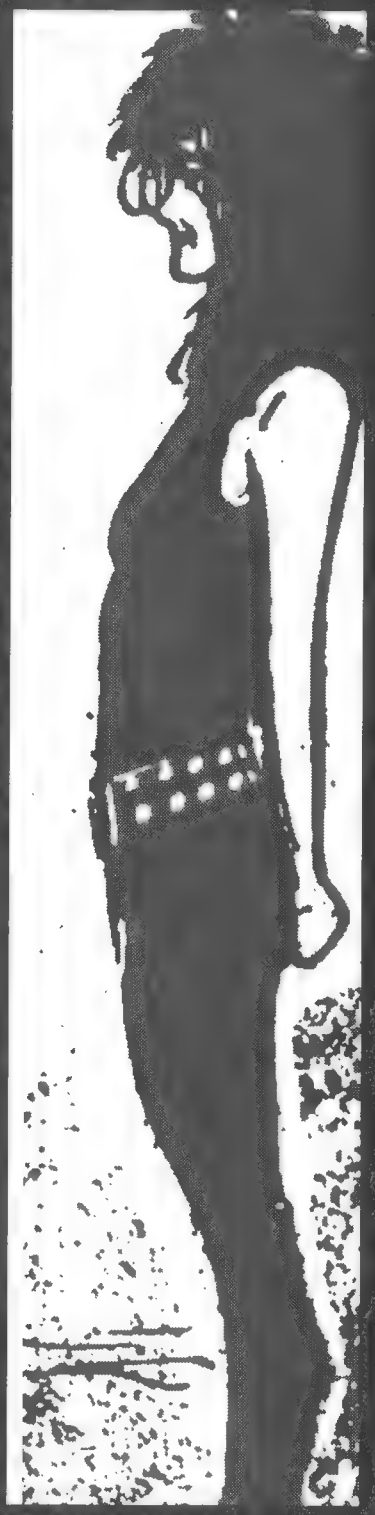
© Marvel Entertainment

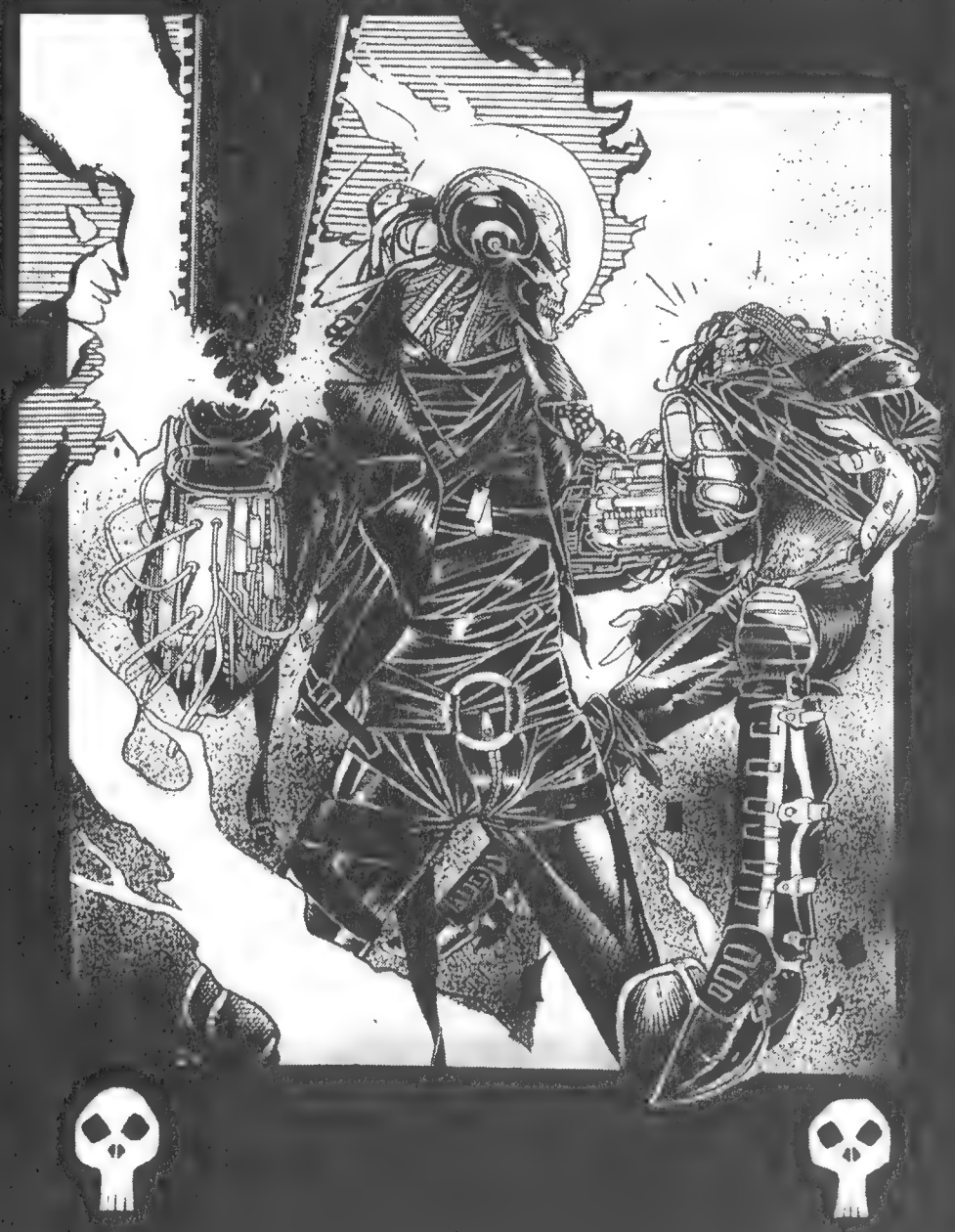
basically my opinion of the quality of the work out there. And I think that I'm good enough that I wouldn't have too much of a problem getting work should the need arise.

"As far as the industry is concerned, everything over here in America is falling down dramatically. I've talked to a few shop owners and they say they've dropped their orders by almost two-thirds. The speculators are finding out that it's not as lucrative as they thought it would be and, I think, when all's said and done what we'll have left is people who buy them because they enjoy collecting and reading the books, with the speculative end back to what it was 3 to 5 years ago. It's going to be interesting to see where it slows down, or levels out to."

This stated, it's unsurprising that he's not actively pursuing the idea of creator owned work, but he does remain open to it as a possibility, if only in the long term.

"At this point I don't have anything specific in mind, but I certainly don't want to rule it out. I know that if I did do something, I probably wouldn't write it and would end up working with a collaborator. I don't pretend to be a writer, it's not one of my better aptitudes," naturally there's a punch line to follow, "Although I'll never say never!" Oh well, at least it made a change to hear an artist express some trepidation about the job.





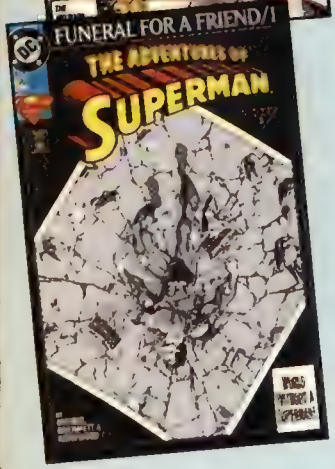
"I think I'll continue to work with established characters on a work for hire basis, and maybe when I've built up enough capital, or enough security, I'll venture out and try to start doing my own stuff, but right now I'm still enjoying doing what I'm doing. It's nice to enjoy working on some characters that you grew up with," adding almost ashamedly, "I don't know, it's real comfortable I suppose."

Of course he may not be able to say that by the end of the year because, with the exception of the San Diego convention, he'll be chained to his drawing board. UKCAC '95 remains a possibility but until then you'll have to keep checking out his work in the not-so-funny papers. He is, after all, rather good. CW

WHO IS THE MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH?
WHOSE PEN SIGNED SUPERMAN'S DEATH WARRANT?
WHOSE PENCILS TURNED WILDSTAR TO DUST BEFORE OUR EYES?
WHOSE INKS ONCE CONDEMNED THE DC UNIVERSE TO CRISIS, AND NOW THREATENS IT WITH ZERO HOUR?
WHO BREATHED LIFE INTO THE LEGENDARY CAPTAIN MARVEL?
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

Jerry Ordway

Master of LIF



Superman & All-Star Squadron
© DC Comics

If Jerry Ordway has a hidden agenda it has been a thirteen-year mission to bring entertainment back into comics. It's like that old Hollywood adage, the one about the three things you need for a good movie, yes?

Story, story, and story. The same can be applied to comics.

While others have stalked the mainstream path, gilding a patina of literary gloss over superhero comics, Ordway was following another, equally valid route through the heart of mainstream superhero fiction and quietly proved that you don't have to change everything to produce a 'good' superhero comic. You could just take what was already there and craft a masterpiece.

It's all about conflict and larger-than-life events - and in recent years Ordway was one of the driving forces in some of the most memorable comic book events in the turbulent history of the field: the Crisis which wiped out Earth-2, the Death of Superman...and as the motor's still running, he's thinking of reversing over the DC Universe at *Zero Hour* just to make sure.

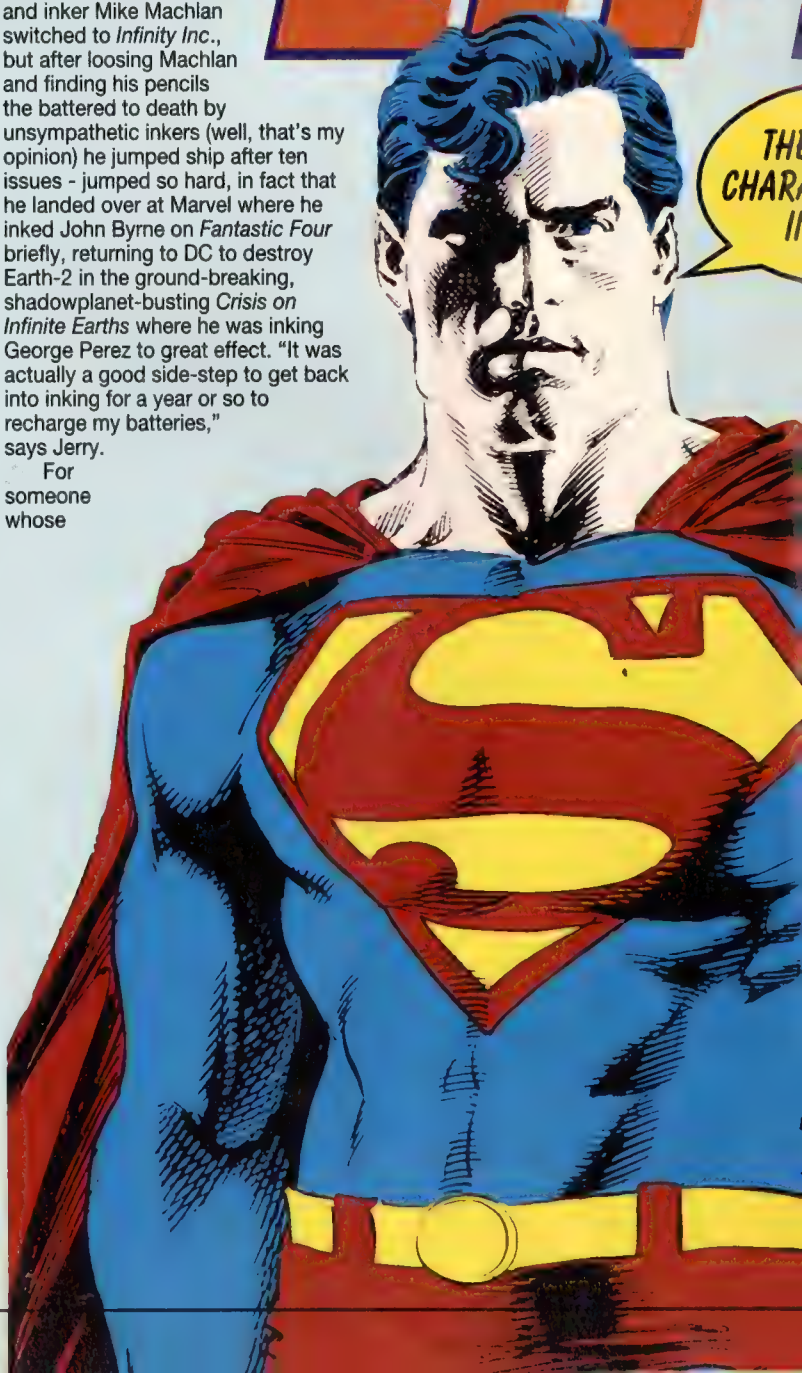
SECRET ORIGINS

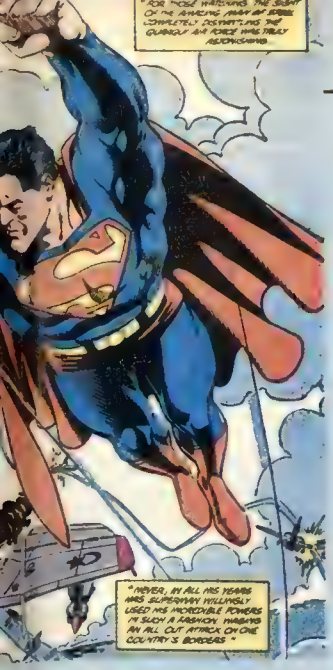
"The end of January was my thirteenth year in professional comics," says Jerry, adding "That pretty scary!"

His first comic work was inking obscure stories in DC anthologies like *House of Mystery* and *Weird War* before transferring to the inks on Roy Thomas' revival of the Golden Age Justice Society of America in *All-Star Squadron*; unlike in the 1980s, where everybody who was anybody was being revived, modernised and filled with angst, Thomas at least had a feeling for the characters he was bringing back, aided by penciller Rich Buckler and inker Ordway who managed to give *All-Star Squadron* a fresh look which, at the same time, didn't lose its sense of history. The modern equivalent, I suppose, has to be James Robinson and Tim Sale's *The Golden Age* which Ordway admires: "It's nice to see someone using the obscure characters like Robotman. They were stand-bys in the book I was doing, and the core team were a bunch of characters nobody remembers any more!". (Of course, what I forgot to ask was, had they brought back Robbie the Robotdog...)

From inking *All-Star*, Ordway turned to pencilling it before Thomas, Ordway and inker Mike Machlan switched to *Infinity Inc.*, but after loosing Machlan and finding his pencils the battered to death by unsympathetic inkers (well, that's my opinion) he jumped ship after ten issues - jumped so hard, in fact that he landed over at Marvel where he inked John Byrne on *Fantastic Four* briefly, returning to DC to destroy Earth-2 in the ground-breaking, shadowplanet-busting *Crisis on Infinite Earths* where he was inking George Perez to great effect. "It was actually a good side-step to get back into inking for a year or so to recharge my batteries," says Jerry.

For someone whose




"NEVER, IN ALL HIS YEARS AND SUPERMAN HILLYHOLY USED HIS INCREDIBLE POWERS IN SUCH A FASHION. MARVYS AN ALL OUT ATTACK ON ONE COUNTY'S BEINGS."

playground seemed to be the Golden Age, I have to confess that before talking to Jerry I imagined he'd be quite old and much of his fascination with classic characters came from reading them as a child in the forties. Not so, as a little digging soon proved: Jerry's CV begins with a three year commercial art degree at Milwaukee Technical High School and a year at Milwaukee Are Technical College, followed by a couple of years in typography and advertising studios, arriving at DC in 1981 at the age of 23.

"Well, my first recollections were getting a whole pile of DC comics, the old 80-page giants, in the early sixties," he tells me. "I was really young, and I don't remember reading them so much as just looking at them. But when I was actually ready to read I discovered Marvel and from that

L-LOIS?
WE'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE THIS BLOODWYND-GUY'S WORD FOR IT THAT SUPERMAN'S DEAD. ARE WE?
YOU TURN THE PAGE. PLEASE AD JUSTICE LEAGUE #70. ON SALE NOW.

Art by Tom Grummett / Doug Hazlewood

E AND DEATH

E PREMIER ACTER IN THE NDUSTRY

point until, I dunno...a couple of years ago, I was a tried and true Marvel fan, which makes it kind of interesting that in a lot of respects I made my mark on Superman. I had very little exposure to Superman because I never really cared for him as a character in comics. The first Superman movie was the real turning point. I was really blown away by the movie, and that was probably the trigger that got me involved in the Superman books."

If the movie was the trigger, it was Roy Thomas holding the gun. Two names crop up again and again in Jerry's career: Thomas and Byrne. Roy Thomas had penned both *All-Star Squadron* and *Infinity Inc.*, and - as a past-master of resuscitation - was about to launch a new series for DC revealing their headline characters' Secret Origins, alternating between classic modern characters and Golden Age characters. Ordway inked the first issue over pencils by Wayne Boring, who had done so much to create the definitive look of Superman in the thirty years he had worked on the character.

"It was a great opportunity for me," admits Ordway. "A lot of people don't like to look back at their old work, but through inking him I got to work with Wayne Boring who was this guy who had made a major, major impact on Superman. I felt the same way when I inked Curt Swan on *The Earth Stealers* which was an old fashioned story but a lot of fun.

"You kinda feel closer to characters: there's a sense of history to it when you're putting your pen down on pencils by someone like Curt Swan, who was the next wave of Superman artists after Wayne Boring. As an artist it's a real treat. I only hope that someone would think nicely of *my* work when I'm sixty years old!"

The *Secret Origins* of Superman was just part of a massive revival for the Last Son of Krypton. Throughout the summer of '86, Byrne deconstructed the Superman legend in fortnightly hammer-blows over the six issues of the *Man of Steel* mini-series, and as summer cooled to autumn Alan Moore was given the task of writing the last Superman story. *Superman* vanished, *Action Comics* concentrated on other characters, and John Byrne plotted his rebirth of the new look Superman - not his first, and far from his last...

THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

"John Byrne was, like, 'The Leader' and we were offering support. I think of Marv Wolfman and myself as the back-up crew: we knew where we stood because John had really set the pace and tone with *Man of Steel*," recalls Jerry about the early days when the trio of tyros were recreating the ultimate comic book Legend.

"The fun part for me really was actually reading what he was doing, because we would get photocopies of all of Byrne's work as it was being done. It was very difficult to co-ordinate stuff, but was fun to see what

he was reintroducing and what he wasn't. By just wiping out continuity he certainly made a lot of enemies, and DC could have said, because ultimately it was DC's decision, 'Do it with what you've got already instead of wiping everything out'. But part of the fun in doing that is that we could look at what was happening and say, *Well, it's time to bring back Terra Man*, and you don't have to worry about people's expectations or them knowing what you're going to do.

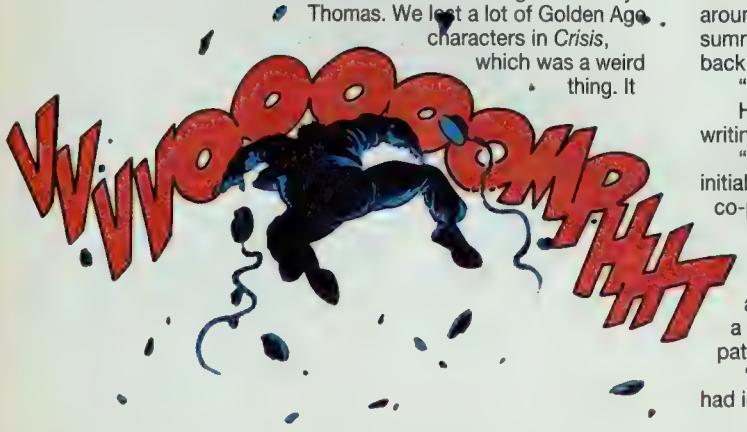
"I did a dumb little story with Terra Man because we kept getting letters from people. Probably no-one remembers who Terra Man was now, but he was this cowboy from space in the old Superman continuity. He was!" This because I'm starting to snigger in the background. "He was a cowboy, and we kept getting letters saying 'When are you going to bring back Terra Man?' And I'm saying, *Why would they want Terra Man back?* I kinda figured it out, or at least I think I have: Neal Adams had drawn the origin of Terra Man in *Superman*, so I figured there was a connection. Maybe people remembered him more fondly than maybe they should have. So when I brought him back for anyone who remembered the old Terra Man they'd think 'Wow, this is different. What are they gonna do now?' And for people who didn't know him it was a new character.

WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO STAY DEAD?

"So, in a way having the continuity wiped out and establishing things little by little you can put a new spin on it and surprise both the people who don't know what you're doing and the people who remember it from the past.

"Of course, you can't win either way!" he adds when I quiz him about the reaction of fans to the continual tampering with continuity. Fans are, after all, just a short step from being fanatics. It takes a brave man to wipe out a branch of established history...who would dream of attacking the roots of the whole universe? 'Brave' in journalese is just an abbreviation for foolhardy. *Crisis on Infinite Earths* did just that, taking an axe to the alternative dimensions in the DC multi-verse.

"It wiped out Earth-2, which was the arena I was working in with Roy Thomas. We lost a lot of Golden Age characters in *Crisis*, which was a weird thing. It was too bad the timing couldn't have been better and *The Man of Steel* hadn't started up the month after *Crisis* finished. The same for others, Wonder Woman and all the other characters: they could have had a start-up right after and *Crisis* itself would have had more impact. We would still be dealing with it today, whereas now they're working on a thing called *Zero Hour* to, again, re-establish continuity.



"But, getting back to Superman...When I was at the UK Comic Art Convention in '88 I was on a panel with John Byrne, and Richard Morrisey, who's an old-time fan of Superman, had travelled over. I don't know whether he'd just come over to ask us questions, but he was pretty persistent, and we got some pretty tough questions from him. He's a keeper of the old continuity, and while I kind of sympathise with someone like that all you can really say is 'I'm really sorry, but you've still got those books to go back to and look at. Itís not real life.'

"I think the same thing came into play when we did his death: people got very, very upset. We were messing with an icon, and sometimes you have to just sit back and say 'Hey, everybody. This is a comic book.'

"Who in their right minds thought he was going to stay dead? This is still the comic business and nobody had said 'Let's just kill him because we've seen enough of him'. We sat around and wanted to come up with some really interesting stories playing off on his death.

"We were all taken by surprise by the magnitude of the media coverage: on the day that *Superman #75* came out, Spike Lee's biography of Malcolm X came out - and Superman hogged all the publicity! That was kind of amusing from the point that it was a Warner movie that they'd spent millions of dollars on, and here we are, a dinky little comic, and Superman's all over the news. I mean, *we were all over the place*.

"I hid for two weeks! I didn't answer the phone...I didn't want any part of it." Oh, yeah? The first writer in history to avoid publicity?

ACTION COMICS

Inker, penciller, writer. There was nothing Jerry wasn't going to try to put the Adventure back in *Adventures of Superman*. "You started plotting around '86 and actually writing in the summer of '88," I say. "Yeah," comes back the reply. Pause.

"What's the question?"

How did you get into the writing...?

"When I got onto *Superman* initially I was offered the chance to co-plot it with Marv. But I wasn't familiar enough with a lot of the background of Superman, so I said, 'Let me work into this a little at a time'." Oh, boy. If only a few other artists were that patient.

"So I did a little bit, and I certainly had input - Gangbuster was

something that Mike Machlan and I had come up with, kind of as a substitute because we wanted to use The Guardian but we weren't allowed to, so we came up with Gangbuster, and a few other things.

"When Marv left and Byrne took over, John was very receptive and very helpful in really cutting me in on the plot. A lot of people tend to stake out territories and a lot of writers who don't draw tend to be a little more protective of their arena. People like John Byrne don't have anything to worry about: he can draw and he can write, so he wasn't threatened by giving me a little input, and even giving me a credit. So I had a real easy time and we had a lot of fun, and that paved the way for me to write *Superman*. When John left, Mike Carlin called me up and said 'Do you want to do it?' and I said 'No, not really'. And he said 'Oh come on, you can do it'.

"Basically, because I was the only one left standing, they handed me the job. But I think I'd proved myself with my input into the storylines up to that point, and I was aware that, like the comedian on stage, a hook could come out and yank me off if everybody hated me.

"I was also aware that I was auditioning in front of a very big audience. I think people were more kind to me, in a sense, because Byrne had polarised fans: he took a lot of heat for revamping continuity, and I thing when he left - even tho' Mike Carlin, Roger Stern and myself had had a lot of fun working with him - a lot of fans were breathing a sigh of

A BUNCH OF CHARACTERS NOBODY REMEMBERS
AS
L-LOOK, EVERYBODY! OVER THERE-- COMING OUT OF THE WHITE-HOUSE GATE--
IT'S THE JUSTICE SOCIETY!
HEAR THAT, ROBOTMAN? SOUNDS LIKE WE'VE JUST BEEN PROMOTED!
IF YOU MEAN, JOHNNY QUICK, THAT MOST OF US ARE NOT TRUE MEMBERS OF THE FAMOUS JSA--
J-7240

relief.

"He had, to put it honestly, pissed a lot of people off, and I think the fans were more receptive to what we were going to do; somehow we were viewed as the good guys because we'd stuck it out, or whatever. That helped a lot. It took us through some low sales because immediately after John leaving, the sales on the books dropped quite a bit. I can't blame the retailers because they were, as far as they were concerned, dealing with an unknown quantity in me. Byrne was the ringleader and he had left the books. Who was to say that the books wouldn't just fall flat.

"Thankfully we proved ourselves, and the books are certainly selling now. Although now I just enjoying reading them."

Jerry had already been at the centre of one of Superman's recent highlights, the revelation to Lois Lane that Clark Kent was no more than a carelessly discarded pair of glasses away from the man she so desired, and at the tail end of 1992 took Superman the full distance, or at least as far as the sliproad: straight up there, guv. Place with the pearly white gates. You can't miss it.

"Something that has kind of gotten lost in time is that before Doomsday Superman books were certainly respectable sellers, but we were selling in the 100,000 range, and we, the group of people who were working on the books, wanted them to do better. Not because we weren't making big dough - DC as a company was more than happy with what we were doing because we were consistent - but because we felt that here was The premier character in the industry, but so many other titles were selling better. There was a pride there, and we wanted people to read it"

Of course, as Jerry has already said, nobody in their right minds would believe that Superman would *stay* dead. But...Jerry Ordway, Tom Grummett and Doug Hazlewood led the procession that was *Funeral For A Friend*, and, ultimately, the 'Heaven Can Wait' prequel to *Reign of the Supermen*: *Adventures of Superman #500*. Which body did he come back in?

EVERYBODY AT DC WENT OU OF THEIR WAY TO BACK US

You know as well as I do. It wasn't any of them...and I bet the punchline fooled a few people. No longer on the field of play, Ordway's a spectator like the rest of us. What does he think of the changes made to the character he helped build, and then cut down, over six years?

"Oh, I like what they've done. Not that I have any control over it, but if I'd stayed on the book I would have fought for a little modification of the costume. I would have liked to have seen a little more change, superficially, but I think a lot of that ends up being dictated by licensing, because of the TV show, and thatis kid of a shame.

"But, on the other hand, everybody at DC went out of their way to back us when we did the thing." *Murdered him*, you mean (sob) "Jenette (Kahn, DC President) and Paul (Levitz, DC Publisher)...everybody. The top brass at DC were very supportive and that included the licensing department.

"I mean, we *killed Superman*, and a lot of people who had paid big bucks to license him for products, they were a little nervous," adding in mock panic, 'Hey! We just spent a lot of money to secure rights for this video game, and you guys have *killed him off!*'

"You have to look at it as like you're all on the same team. I think that's when you get the best results. That's why the Superman books work: because everybody works together as a team. One guy starts off a story, another guy does the middle, and another finishes it off. That requires a lot of faith and a lot of communication."

WILDSTAR

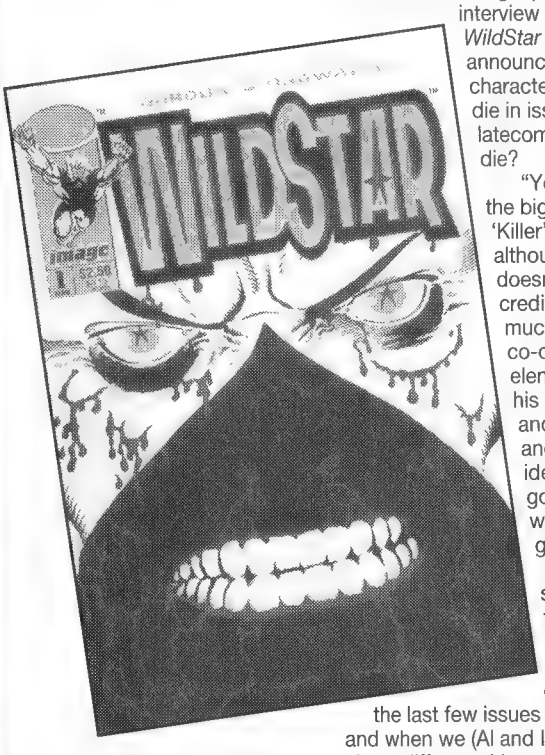
From the highest profile character in comics to the highest profile publisher is maybe not such a big step, except maybe, again, in faith. I remember reading a pre-launch interview with Jerry about *WildStar* in which he announced that the lead character was going to die in issue three. For latecomers...well, did he die?

"Yes he did. He bit the big one," says 'Killer' Ordway, although (again) he doesn't take full credit. "It was pretty much Al Gordon. We co-created a lot of elements, but it was his initial concept, and he wrote it. He and I had a general idea what was going on and where we were going with it."

"Time travel stories are very tricky, obviously. I was doing *WildStar* concurrently with the last few issues of Superman, and when we (Al and I) started talking about different things it made sense: this guy travels back in time, which is the concept, and without giving away the whole story, he makes the ultimate sacrifice to complete his mission which is to try and get out of this time loop.

"It was fun to be working on something new after years of working on characters with such long histories. Although we had wiped the history slate clean eight years ago, there was still an awful lot of information there, stuff that would help you, and stuff that would hamper you...you couldn't really go out and make Superman a killer.

"With a character like WildStar, someone who's brand new, it's up to the audience to find out what he's all about by reading it, and that was really liberating. No pre-conceived notions."



WildStar © Al Gordon & Jerry Ordway

Ordway was known to most of the creators behind Image and his name had come up more than once when they were looking around for new creators to join their growing band. As cautious as ever, Ordway wasn't about to jump in with both feet, burning bridges as he shot past. But: "Al Gordon called me up and said 'I've got this great concept. I just need someone to draw it.' and I thought *Gee, that's perfect*, because I'm the type of person who needs variety. When I do one type of job for too long I tend to get a bit of burn-out, which is why I like jumping around every so often, like doing the pencils on *WildStar* after writing for other artists for so long. The fact that I can do these things, and people ask me to ink something, or pencil, or write something, gives me the perfect opportunity to jump around and not get bored."

Bored is something that could never happen at Image. Beset by horrific schedule chaos...well, you don't need a diagram to know what's been happening. The same kind of problems hit *WildStar* which began in March '93, then skidded through May and September, the conclusion limping in during November.

"We had a horrible publishing schedule," explains Ordway. "I've said this any time anyoneís asked me: I will take my share of the blame, and Al will take his share. We screwed up. Regardless of what other things happened, and a lot of things did go wrong, ultimately it's down to the people producing the book, and we hurt ourselves tremendously by being late. It's an embarrassment for me to have been that late. What we didn't reckon with was that there were so many details that would take you away from actual drawing: calling the printer, making sure color separations were being done, paying people. All the business stuff people were totally unprepared for."

The headline-grabbing cancellations last year were raw meat to the media wolves, yet as time passes, and some thought goes into assessing what really happened, and Ordway's own insiders view is one that a number of people are swinging around to: "I don't know how you can be mad at them. They were nice enough to cut us in on their imprint. We didn't start with them: we started after we'd already seen they were selling really well, and every book in that second wave benefited, even if they were later cancelled. The creators got at least one monstrous pay check from their books and, again, if everybody had gotten their books out, it would have been a different story."

WildStar made it, one of the few second wave titles to run to its conclusion, and overall it proved a neat re-introduction of Ordway as penciller to the world:

"I think part of the impetus for doing the book with Image was that I felt as an artist my artwork hadn't been seen for two years, because I'd pretty much been writing and not really drawing. To prepare an audience for Captain Marvel, I really wanted something that would set me off with a fairly good audience, which I knew Image could deliver."

Deliver it did. Despite the scheduling problems, *WildStar* was a success with fans and...well, it had its critics, which we'll explore in the conclusion of our interview next month, where we also discover the history of Jerry's latest offering, the hardcover, full-colour Captain Marvel graphic novel. **CW**

"It's hard for me to look at *WildStar* as violent, but I've heard that it is"

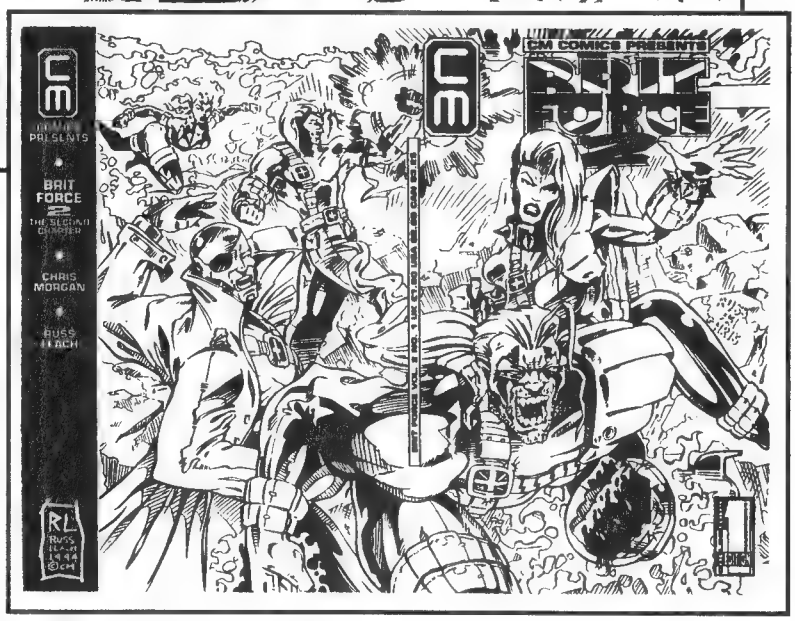
"Hmmm. Here I am again, following John Byrne"

"I'm talking to DC about, and this is your scoop, about inking *Zero Hour*"

CM COMICS PRESENTS

CHRIS MORGAN
RUSS LEACH

BRIT FORCE 2



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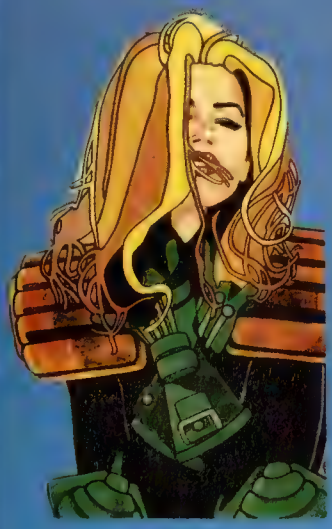
David Bishop... Going for Gold



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What's new about Judge Dredd Megazine #50?

We've been busting a gut to make this the best issue of the title we've ever published and I think *Megazine #50* gets pretty close. Certainly it's got the best line-up of creative talent we've had in one issue since we first launched as a monthly, back in 1990. The artists include Ian Gibson, Colin MacNeil and Frank Quitely. On the writing side John Wagner is now permanently installed as the Dredd writer, while Alan Grant has written an 11-part *Anderson, Psi* series for us.

We're adding eight pages to every issue from 50 and that means an extra strip each issue. When the *Megazine* was launched it was a 52-page monthly for £1.50. Now, three and a half years later, the fortnightly *Megazine* will be a 52-page comic costing £1.50. Full circle, really!

Why the extra pages?

We have a price increase every year, usually 10p. When we were budgeting for 1994, I said why not go straight from £1.35 to £1.50 and use the extra revenue to add eight pages. That way the readers are getting something extra for the extra cost, not just a few free gifts. Plus it kind of signals a new direction for the title...

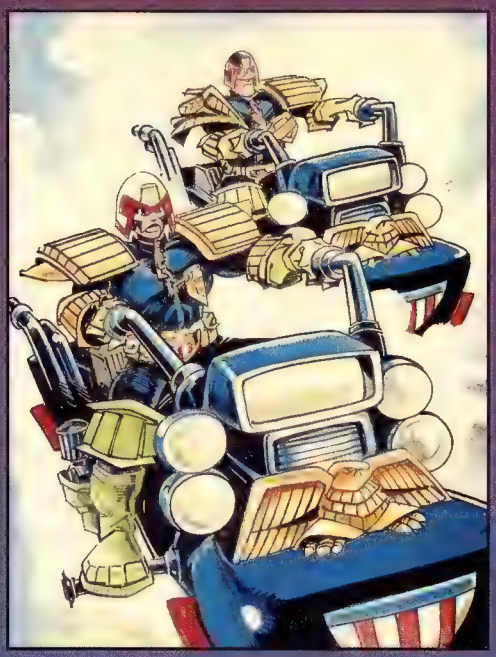
Where's the Megazine going?

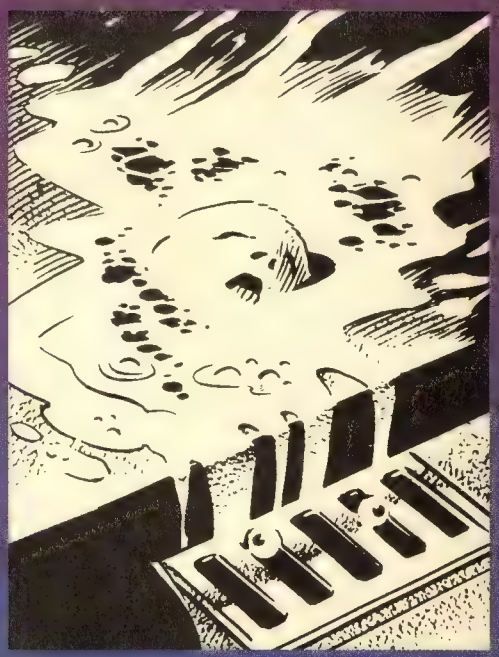
Basically I want to consolidate it a lot more. We've introduced a flood of new characters over the last year, which has led to a lot of chopping and changing. Readers would just be getting into a series when we'd whip it out and hit them with something else. I think we've been too inconsistent. Apart from Dredd being in every issue and a longish Anderson story, nothing seemed to last more than a few issues in 1993.

So we're going to feature characters for longer runs, anything up to a dozen issues at a time, really give them a chance to develop. Dredd, Missionary Man and Anderson will all be running virtually non-stop from now until the end of August.

In a Megazine readers' poll you published in issue 49, Anderson was actually voted more popular than Dredd in his own title!

Yes, that was a real surprise for





me at the time, but looking back it seems logical. The *Childhood's End* series that Alan Grant and Kevin Walker did was immensely popular, especially with Anderson deciding to quit the Judges at the end. The art was great but I think the real strength was Alan's writing, he is constantly developing, evolving the character of Anderson. So now I'm trying to apply that lesson to others characters, even Dredd...

Murmurings of another mega-epic, perhaps? Judgement Day II?

God, no! Anything but that! *Judgement Day* was a good idea but having a big apocalyptic war story so soon after the mass murder and mayhem of *Necropolis* was a bit repetitive. Basically, I think readers are sick and tired of big body counts and mega-epics. Killing three billion people sounds impressive but is actually quite dull - and hard to convey in a comic strip too! You just don't care if that many people die, the numbers are too big, it's almost unreal. You need to be made to care about characters for their death to have any impact. That's why a film like *Schlinder's List* succeeds,

Frank QUITELY Unmasked!

Frank Quitely burst onto the mainstream British comics scene last May when the character Missionary Man debutted on the cover of the Judge Dredd Megazine. The artwork was heaped with praise from the title's readers and America's DC Comics was offering the young artist work. But like most overnight sensations, this sudden acclaim had actually taken more than four years to happen. It all started with a misunderstanding...

"I thought I was going for a job interview," explains the Glasgow artist. "It turned out they were looking to start a comedy comic and wanted people to contribute pages basically unpaid. I jumped at the chance!"

The comic became *Electric Soup*, an anarchic legend north of the Border and the launchpad for several emerging artists. Quitely contributed a strip called The Greens, a spoof of Dudley D. Watkins classic series The Broons in the *Sunday Post*. Later he began contributing MAD-style movie spoofs including Alien3, Cape Fear and JFK - sometimes without having seen the actual movie he was spoofing!

"I worked on *Electric Soup* right from the start in 1989, all 17 issues. We did everything, our own writing, drawing and lettering, everything," explains Quitely. The Greens and his movie spoofs were a logical extension from his early influences.

"I had always been interested in comics but wasn't a fan. I remember liking Conan and Spiderman - it took me a while to realise different people drew them!

"I didn't really have a favourite artist until I saw Mort Drucker's work on MAD, and Dudley D. Watkins on the Broons. Comedy was much more of an influence than superhero stuff.'

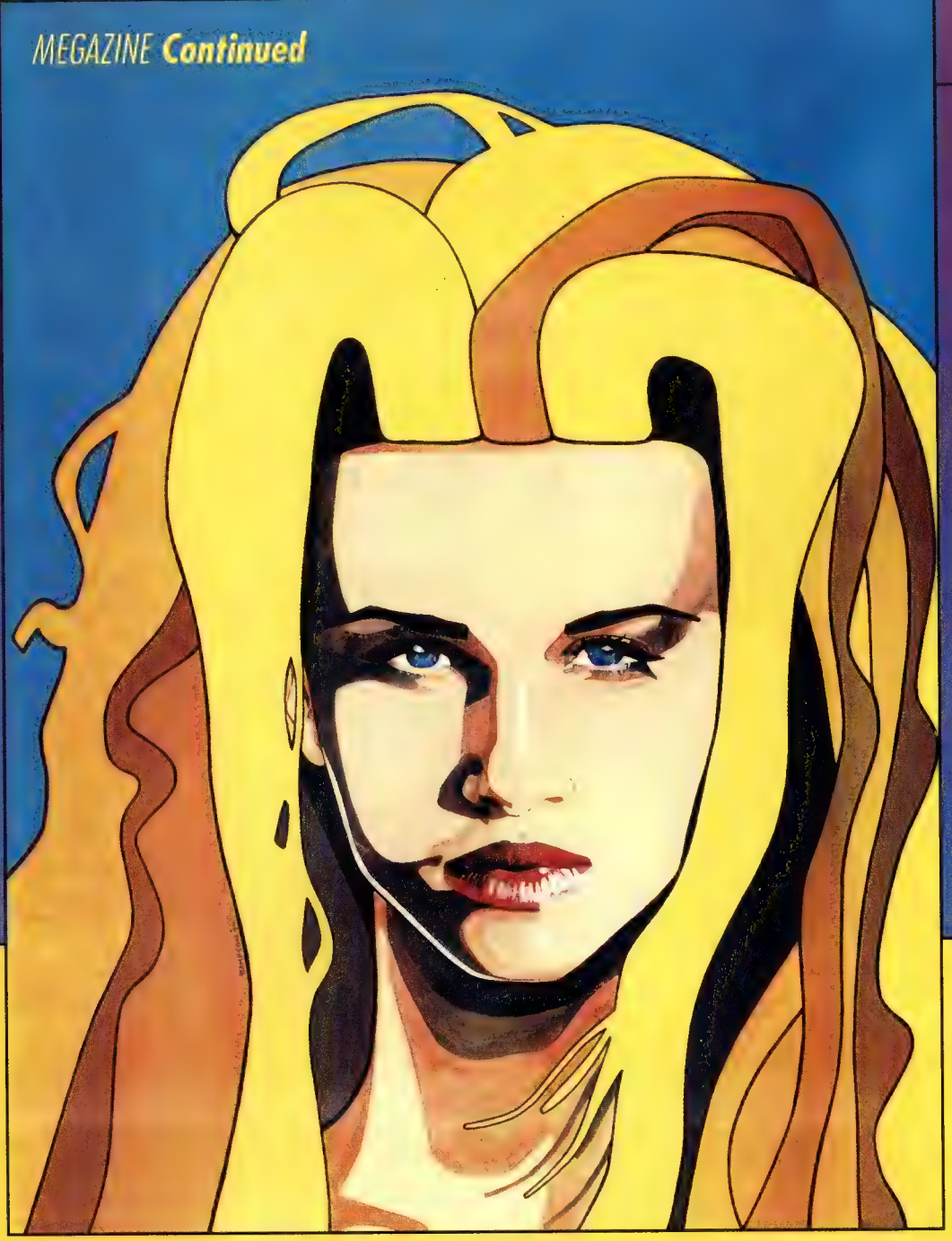
After a couple of years *Electric Soup* caught the eye of *Viz* publisher John Brown, who gave the title a wider distribution hoping for a repeat of *Viz*'s smash success. But lightening didn't strike twice and the Soup contributors began to look for extra work elsewhere.

Quitely got his work on the *Judge Dredd Megazine* by drawing some Batman samples! He laughs at remembering the roundabout way that led to his first commission for a mainstream title.

"I made up four pages of Batman samples and sent them to Steve MacManus, managing editor of the *2000AD* Group at Fleetway. He sent me a John Wagner spec script and I did some more samples from that. Then he put me on to the *Megazine's* editor, David Bishop and yet more samples followed!"

But the young artist's perseverance finally paid off when he was offered a seven-page strip commission - the first Missionary Man story, written by Gordon Rennie.

"It was the first full story I'd done from anybody else's script. I didn't know if I would fancy it, I thought I could write! But I really enjoyed it, working from Gordon's scripts, and then from Robbie Morrison's after that."



because it makes you care about the people the Nazis killed.

Nazis and Judge Dredd...?

Err, sorry, getting off the point a bit there!

Anyway, major developments are in store for Dredd which do not involve the deaths of billions of faceless people, no huge wars, no massive battle scenes. John Wagner is writing a small-scale, hard-hitting Dredd turning point story, that will run in both the *Megazine* and *2000AD*. Carlos Ezquerra is drawing a lot of it.

A crossover story?

To quote Francis Urquhart - you might think that, I couldn't possibly comment.

Looking back at three and a half years of the Megazine, what has the title achieved? What are you most proud of?

We've published some great stories - *America*, *Young Death*, *Devlin Waugh*, *Childhood's End*, *Return of the Taxidermist*. We've broadened the scope of Dredd's world a bit. And we've published a lot of new talent that might otherwise not have made print in the mainstream - Peter Doherty, Dean Ormston, Frank Quitely, Robbie Morrison and a lot more.

It used to be that working for 2000AD was a stepping stone to

Continued on page 65

Frank QUITELY Unmasked!

CONTINUED

After two seven-page Missionary Man stories and a cover, Frank began work on another new series for the *Megazine*, Shimura. This Robbie Morrison-scripted series showcased a Hondo City Judge, from the Japan of the future.

Originally the three-part series was to have been painted by Colin MacNeil, who had painted the very first Hondo City Dredd story in *2000AD* five years ago. But scheduling problems prevented that, so MacNeil did character and costume designs for the three-part series instead.

(Ironically, Quitely was meant to paint a six-part follow-up series of Shimura but had to bow out because of scheduling problems. The series is instead being drawn by Colin MacNeil! That story begins in *Judge Dredd Megazine #50*, as does a new Quitely-painted series of Missionary Man.)

Quitely believes having Shimura pre-designed for him by MacNeil was probably beneficial.

"Colin had already worked on the Hondo stuff and I didn't have a great knowledge of Dredd's world. Missionary Man doesn't really cross over much with Dredd's world in terms of the technology in the strip.

"I'm sure Gordon Rennie had planned Missionary Man to be a lot more hi-tech than it proved to be when I drew it. And Robbie wanted Shimura to be very hi-tech, so having Colin design elements of the strip really suited it."

Quitely is currently finishing a six-part Missionary Man series, Bad Moon Rising, which begins in *Megazine #50*. It'll probably be his last major work for a British publisher for a while, as America beckons. By the time the first appearance of Missionary Man was published last May, Quitely was already getting offers from DC.

"It started with Andy Helfer, of Piranha Press. I now done artwork on short stories for four anthology books he's bringing out, with another to come. They're called the *Big Books of Death, Conspiracies, Weirdos, Urban Legends* and *Crime*, I think."

That was followed by Dan Raspler offering a 56-page Lobo book.

"He needed me to start it before I could finish Bad Moon Rising, so I had to turn it down. Now I'm just doing one chapter with several other artists each doing a chapter - Carlos Ezquerra, Sergio Aragones, and Kevin O'Neill have done some. It might be a good thing I'm not doing the whole book..."

Future projects for Quitely include a Lobo special, some painted covers for The Spectre and possibly a Batman story with Alan Grant. Plus there's a creator-owned story with Robbie Morrison for Dark Horse.

"It's called Blackheart and it's about a black vigilante in the US during the 1930s. The story will run for three parts of eight pages each in *Dark Horse Presents*. I've already done some of it but I'm not sure what the story is about because I did the last pages first!"

Ambitions include drawing Batman and Daredevil ('but only in their old costumes') while his favourite own works to date are some of the later Greens stories, his first episode of Shimura and parts of the Missionary Man series he is currently completing.

Finally, why the secret identity of a pen name? Trying to protect his alter ego, perhaps, or just a ploy to fool the taxman?

"Frank Quitely is a spoonerism of quite frankly. It's not really a secret identity. When we started *Electric Soup* a lot of us used pen name and I just sort of stuck with mine. I'm used to signing it at the bottom of my pages now. Maybe it gives me an affinity to superheroes..."

So what is his real name? Frank Quitely pulls away the mask to reveal a mild mannered Glasgow artist. "Call me Vincent, Vincent Deighan." Unmasked at last!

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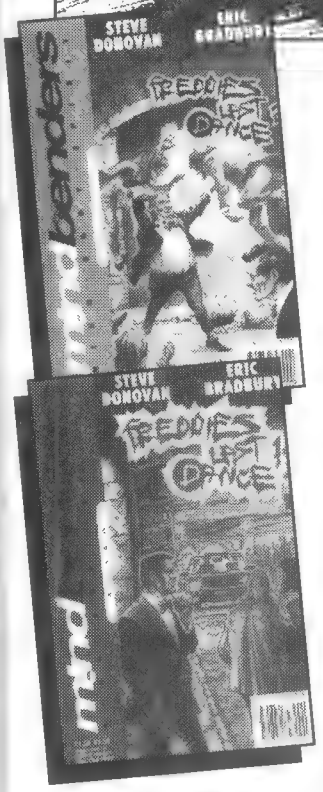
A STANLEY KNIFE FLASHED IN THE DARKNESS, WHICH FREDDIE SMACKED ASIDE WITH A FLAT- HANDED JAB TO THE WRIST, TWISTING THE SCALLY'S ARM BACK SO FAR IT MIGHT HAVE BROKEN IF HIS BODY HADN'T TWISTED WITH IT. THE DOPED-UP KID'S LEGS BUCKLED; HE WAS GOING DOWN AND A JACK-HAMMER PUNCH SLAMMING INTO HIS HEAD MADE SURE OF IT.

BEHIND FREDDIE, ONE OF THE THUGS TRIED TO STOP THE BLOOD LEAKING FROM HIS NOSE WITH A CALLUSED HAND, OUT OF THE FIGHT, KNOWING HE'D BEEN BEATEN, KNOWING THAT ANY MOVE HE MADE WOULD BE SLAPPED-DOWN BY THE BLACK-SUITED BOUNCER WITH THE RATTLESNAKE EYES. NEXT TO HIM, HIS FRIEND HEARD BELLS, SAW STARS. WELL OUT OF IT. AND BEHIND THEM, PISSED TO THE EYEBALLS, ROBBIE WATCHED FREDDIE END HIS DANCE.



© Steve Donovan/ and Eric Bradbury

"It's about the East End of Liverpool, really," says Eric when I ask him about Freddie's Last Dance. "These Liverpool roughs, scruffs, crooks, dope addicts - you say it, they're all in there: bad language, filth. I don't know!" The veteran of over 40 years in comics laughs, continuing "It's quite enjoyable to draw."

Eric Bradbury's career has entered it's fifth decade, almost certainly making him the longest-serving artist still working in comics, yet this is the first interview he has succumbed to. Not through embarrassment about his chosen career: he's still enthusiastic, and proud of his achievements, claiming "I've not got a miserable memory from among the lot of them," when we plunder his past work for favourites. How many people can say that? The years of anonymously hitting weekly artistic deadlines, and a readily confessed terrible memory have made him shy away in the past, despite frequent enquiries and rare opportunities. September's London convention was the first he had attended, dropping in with his brother to see Freddie's writer and publisher, Steve Donovan.

At 73, Eric is still a dynamo, white-haired now but with a sure hand and eye. Until a couple of years ago he indulged in his hobby, flying, regularly, sadly now so expensive he's had to stay put on terra firma for some time. That hasn't ended his passion for planes, although that's now limited to painting them: "I usually go up to the airshows at North Weald with my brother. I learned to fly - I could fly during the war when I was in the services, but it took it up after the war - but through shortage of funds had to pack it in again. So I've switched to archery. "I've been into archery for the last forty years," he says. "I'm a county shot. But my wife," he continues, even more proudly, "she's an international shot. She won one of the county shoots a couple of weeks ago. We're getting on and we're still winning!"

I've always been a fan of Eric's work, dating back to the sixties when he drew 'Mytek the Mighty' and 'The House of Dolmann' for *Valiant*. For those who only know Mytek from the brief revival in the *2000AD Classic Action Special*, he was a giant mechanical ape, the control room housed beneath his massive domed forehead. Mytek was created in the image of an ape-god by Professor Boyce to pacify Akari tribesmen in central Africa, but stolen by his power-mad assistant, the evil Gogra. Meanwhile, Dolmann was the ventriloquist-master of a fighting force of remote-controlled puppets. Of course, nobody thought there was anything *odd* about a grown man regularly taking his dummy's out in his motorcycle sidecar, or that he used to tuck them up in bed at the end of each adventure. Certainly no worse than following the adventures of men in capes and tights and very visible pantie lines.

Bradbury's artistic career began much earlier. After leaving Beckenham Art School, he joined Kelley's Directories, doing lettering blocks, "which I *hated*," he groans. "I went into photographic colouring at the Aeolian Hall, a music place in Bond Street.

"When war came I though I'd better join up, so I volunteered for flying in 1940; first of all I was a target operator in Hawker Henleys - and it was more dodgy for the aircraft than the target. From there I went onto being an airgunner/wireless operator flying Wellingtons, graduating onto Stirlings. Those Stirling were shockers," he adds with disgust."You couldn't get more that 12,000 feet out of them and, of course, you came into range of the heavy flack.

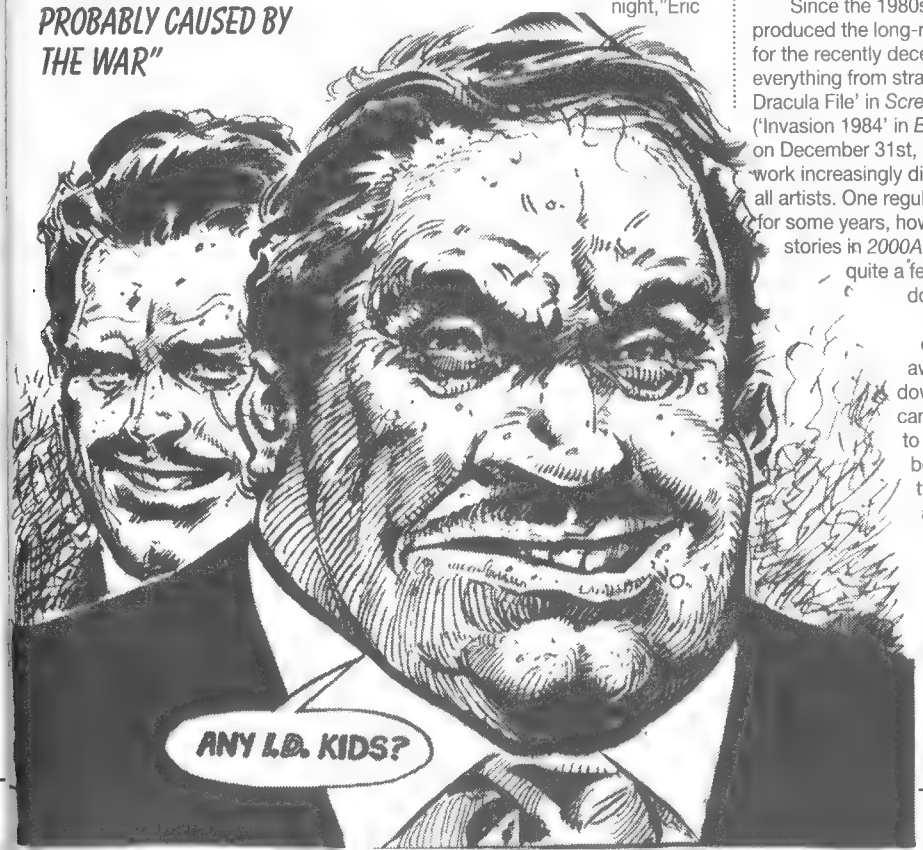
"I managed to get away with it. I think I only had one crash with the Stirlings. I had four altogether. I did a whole tour in Lancasters which was thirty raids; got wounded in the leg, which was all I got. Not bad when so many of my pals got the chop."

On demobilisation Eric joined G-B Animation, based in Cookham, which closed in November 1949, moving straight into comics. His first strip was to fill-in on 'Our Ernie', the outrageous adventures of a young Lancashire lad whose Pa always ended the strip with "Daft I call it". By 1953 he was working on a western adventure strip, 'Lucky Logan', with another ex-animator, Mike Western, soon expanding his horizons and talents to historical strips (such as

'Max Bravo' and 'Dick Turpin') and war strip - notably the early air-ace adventures of 'Battler Britton'. But it was in the sixties that his most famous strips appeared: 'Maxwell Hawke', the ghost hunter forever creeping around mist-shrouded moors and sheer-walled castles; 'Cursitor Doom', the bold, occult investigator (later reprinted as 'Amadeus Wolf'); 'Simon Test', an athletic adventurer pitched into a classic plot, facing thirteen tests - the prize, eternal life; and 'Charlie Peace' which made a comic-hero out of the Victorian murderer. Ah, those were the days...

Bradbury always seemed to get the darkest of fantasy stories, and the grimmest of war yarns to draw, all of which were well-served by his dense, realistic style, usually with a twist of horror: "The sort of thing I dream at night," Eric says, laughing, but adds: "I get some horrible dreams at night - probably caused by the war. [My artwork] just comes out that way."

"I GET SOME HORRIBLE DREAMS AT NIGHT - PROBABLY CAUSED BY THE WAR"



Bradbury's talents to portray the grim realities of war were tested in the 1970s in *Battle* for whom he drew 'Rat Pack', comics answer to the Dirty Dozen, and, one of his personal favourites, 'Joe Two Beans', an Indian grunt serving in the far east. The more starkly realistic stories were very different to the menacing, but comparatively lightweight fantasy of the sixties. "I just shoot with the times," explains Bradbury. "If its there, you do it. I like drawing natural things, natural action stuff, and there was plenty of action in 'Joe Two Beans'. He used spears, knives, guns, murder...I don't mind what I draw as long as there's some action in it."

Since the 1980s, during which he produced the long-running 'Doomlord' for the recently deceased *Eagle*, and everything from straight horror ('The Dracula File' in *Scream!*) to future war ('Invasion 1984' in *Battle*, the strip ending on December 31st, 1983) he has found work increasingly difficult to find, as have all artists. One regular spot he has had for some years, however, are the Tharg stories in *2000AD*: "Yeh, I've done quite a few of those. I like doing Tharg: you can be crazy. You can do anything and get away with it. I just put down the daftest thing I can think of...it's difficult to explain. Otherwise I'd be sitting around twiddling my thumbs and living on my old-age pension." Whilst work is thin on the ground (*Freddie's Last Dance* has not quite managed to maintain even its bi-monthly schedule, thanks to its printers), Eric still maintains a busy schedule: "We're all sitting around with our tongues out waiting for work, just waiting for somebody...but I don't sit around doing sod all," he laughs. "I suppose I usually start around ten, stop for lunch, and work to about five. If I do any painting it's usually in the evening. I love drawing, all manner of drawing: I'm trying crayons next and all sorts of things - there's so much to do and never enough time. You don't live long enough to cover the lot."

STEVE DONOVAN

"I was in art college, and when I left at 17 I worked on the doors as a bouncer in various night clubs around Liverpool. *Freddie's Last Dance* is basically what I saw in the five years I was doing it."

Steve Donovan, writer of *Freddie's Last Dance*, spent Christmas on the door of the Slaughtered Lamb. "That was an eye-opener. A few things went on that'll be going into *Freddie's* sooner or later." For him, *Freddie's* has been part of a three-year struggle to put together a line of strips which first came to fruition last year as the 170- page *Mindbenders* anthology. With the market always unyeildingly cautious about anthologies, *Mindbenders* did astonishingly well, but its size and price worked against it, so Steve is switched to editing a series of separate titles which he launched at UKCAC with the aforementioned *Freddie's* and *The Last Planet*. Both should have second issues out by the time you read this, with a third title in advanced preparation for publication in the summer.

The eponymous 'hero' of *Freddie's* is a hard-man bouncer at a nightclub, based on someone Donovan knew from his days on the door: "Freddie was from Iran; when he was 17 he was a bodyguard for his father, and then he was in the military, and then the foreign legion. He got the shove from the legion and ended up in Liverpool.

"I worked with him for a while. He was killed one night, stabbed. It was a very stupid fight; he'd been in the military all his life, a really tough guy, and over a silly mistake he died." How he died is part of the story.

"I incorporated all this in with a lot of events that I saw, and that's the essence of the story, how the night life works in the clubs and how the police get involved. There was a time when the doormen ruled the night, but over a period of time, around when I was involved, it changed and gangs started to rule the night life."

The distinct difference between artist and writer is in their years: this is Donovan's first published work, whereas Bradbury has been in the business for 44 years. Donovan has nothing but praise for Bradbury's work: "It's not the type of thing which anyone could do: I tried a couple of artists and there just wasn't any life there. Eric brings life to an otherwise dull story, and adds so much." CW

Reviews

How else could we begin this month except with the wedding of the year? Scott and Jean tie the knot in ***X-Men 30*** (Marvel, $1.95), the embodiment of fairytale romance. Boy meets girl, they fall in love, girl gets replaced by cosmic entity which tops itself meaning girl is presumed dead while actually lying in a cocoon on the ocean floor, boy marries girl's looky-likey who eerily turns out to be girl's clone and is later presumed dead while actually living in Australia, boy and girl re-unite, clone returns and psychically merges with girl, boy and girl procrastinate - no matter how many times we've seen it before, that ol' slushy formula never fails, does it?

Or *does* it? Fabian Nicieza's bland dialogue tramples over the little moments of light and joy that we're invited to share here - a rare opportunity in four-colour land. The effect is actually to *distance* the reader from the intimacy. Imagine the sort of thing that's spoken by that oh-so-sincere gentleman who voiceover trailers for all those warm, caring Hollywood films, and you'll get the idea. Feel the warmth.

Fashion pundits will note with interest that off-the-shoulder and restricted breathing are both *in* this year.

The romantics among you should be warned; the transition from the *Dynasty*-gloss true lurve of Scott 'n' Jean to the unbridled truth about relationships held in ***Nina's New & Improved All-Time Greatest Collectors' Item Classic Comics 1*** (Dark Horse, $2.50) may be too traumatic to attempt. Nina Paley's envigorating underground bigfoot cartooning uses playful symbolism alongside slogans, launched at you like ad campaigns, to present the ups and downs of romance, sex and cats. Laugh and agonise at once, as those embarrassing moments you thought you'd buried claw their way out of the vault of self-respect.

The Dance of Lifey Death (Dark Horse, $3.95) sees the welcome return of Alec (the artist/writer Eddie Campbell of Earth-2), a character which must be setting some sort of record for the number of publishers under whose banners he's appeared. Campbell should be applauded for his persistence in making sure his most personal work sees print: this is storytelling at its purest, with his wry narration connecting the reader directly to the ritual's oral traditions. As you read through apparently unconnected vignettes, themes start to emerge, this time dealing with our frequent confrontations with death, from private grief to global catastrophe, and celebrating life as it's splashed across an equally broad canvas.

Big Mouth 3 (Fantagraphics, $2.95) also takes an anecdotal approach, with cartoonist Pat Moriarty inviting a multitude of guest scripters to spin a yarn. It's this succession of different voices that ultimately weakens the book; crammed into such a small space, many of the episodes end just as you begin to wish they would continue, remaining interludes without purpose.

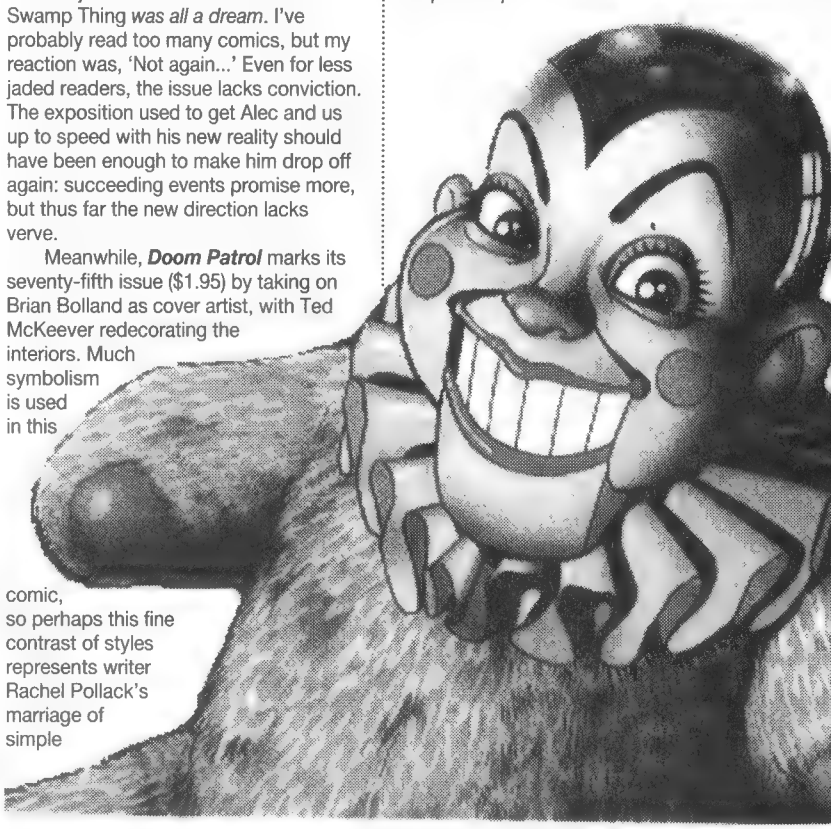
DC's Vertigo imprint celebrated its first birthday with its March issues: after a spectacular opening sales rise, circulation has settled down somewhat, which can't be what DC were hoping for. With steady earner *Sandman* approaching the end of its natural life, other titles are attempting to boost their profiles. *Hellblazer* seems well set to become the flagship title in Morpheus' absence, but DC must be hoping it can have a few more titles make an impact with the fanboys (There's little indication yet of Vertigo venturing beyond the confines of the comic shop). ***Swamp Thing 140*** ($1.95) welcomes new writer Mark Millar, who has accomplice Grant Morrison along for the first storyline. The opening pages feel tired rather than delivering the intended shock, as Alec Holland jerks awake to find his life as Swamp Thing *was all a dream*. I've probably read too many comics, but my reaction was, 'Not again...' Even for less jaded readers, the issue lacks conviction. The exposition used to get Alec and us up to speed with his new reality should have been enough to make him drop off again: succeeding events promise more, but thus far the new direction lacks verve.

Meanwhile, ***Doom Patrol*** marks its seventy-fifth issue ($1.95) by taking on Brian Bolland as cover artist, with Ted McKeever redecorating the interiors. Much symbolism is used in this comic, so perhaps this fine contrast of styles represents writer Rachel Pollack's marriage of simple humanity and weird intellectualism. Since the beginning of her run, Pollack's characterisations have become more vulnerable and more accessible - too much for some, I imagine, not enough for others. The Patrol's still an acquired taste - I continue to find the George and Marion 'textbook domesticated couple' skit particularly irritating - but there is enough here to engage any new readers. McKeever's cartoon nightmares like The Chief's head-on-a-trolley offer a lot of compensation.

How else could we end but with a bang? If *Doom Patrol* isn't surreal enough for you, how about a comic written by Warren Ellis that's been *approved* by the Comics Code Authority? Ladies and gentlemen, ***Hellstorm 12*** (Marvel, $2.00) *is* that comic - a title which has summoned belatedly the attitude to go somewhere and the determination to entertain in the grossest way possible. Leonard Manco's artwork is too concerned with unfocussed mark-making, but it has its moments and is aided immensely by D'Israeli's acid colours. Those horror devotees who disregarded my pleadings to avoid the careering, berserk humiliation that was *Hellstorm* this time last year - *I told you*. Those who listened - it's all right now, Warren's here to take care of you (heh heh).

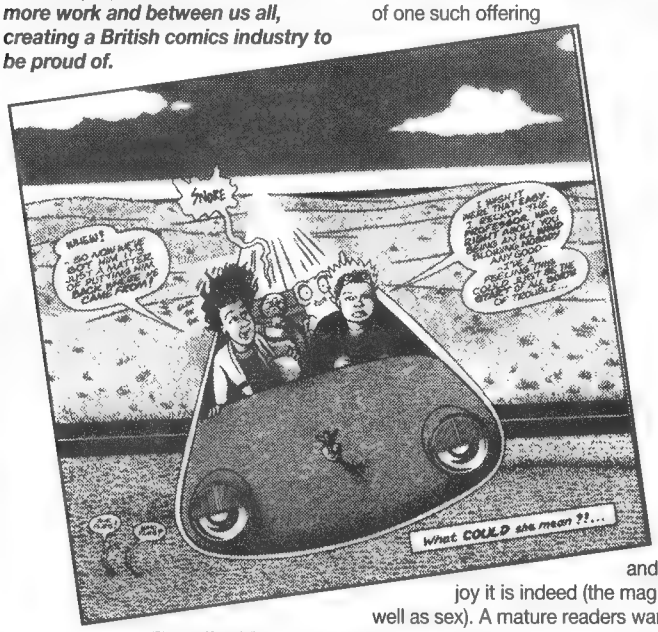
Richard Hill

Review copies courtesy of Birmingham's Fantastic Store (Telephone 021-643 3667). The prices are quoted in dollars: the sterling rate may vary slightly from shop to shop.

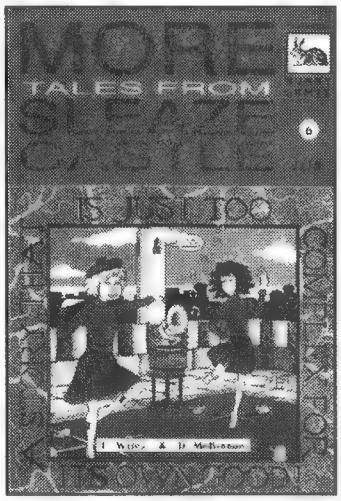


Small Press

Comics have flooded in thick and fast this month, so there's less detail on each title than I would ideally like. Also I want to point out that my central aim is to increase the awareness of the small press - so I am unlikely to slag anything off. If I really don't like something I'll just not review it. Any criticism is intended to be a guide to the potential purchaser and feedback to the creators. My main aim, is to get each of you reading this to buy at least one of the comics featured, thereby encouraging creators to produce more work and between us all, creating a British comics industry to be proud of.

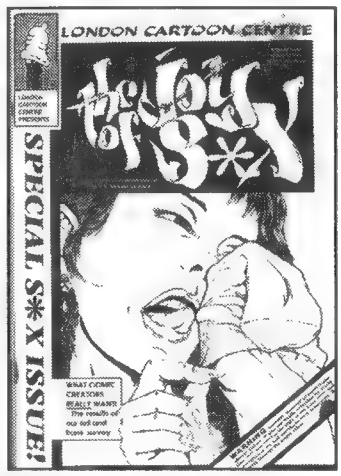


First off is ***More Tales from Sleaze Castle #6*** from the extremely clever people at Gratuitous Bunny Comix. There is nothing sleazy about this comic, it's actually a mad time and space travel romp with myriad references to cult 60s television, strange religions, codes, parodies and more high weirdness then you can shake a large stick at. This is a highly respectable publication which I am sure will eventually catch on as Cerebus did and deserves to be



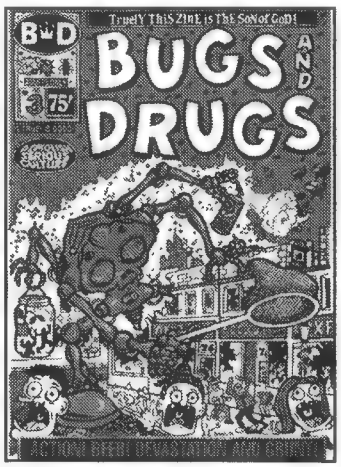
stocked by every comic shop worth its salt. Production values, plot and artwork are all tip top too, so it's about time you caught up with what is sure to be a phenomenal success. Get your copy from Gratuitous Bunny Comics, 33 Windsor Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland, SR6 7SY for £1.30 + 40p P&P per copy.

The London Cartoon Centre are a bastion of small press publishing. They teach the arts of cartooning, self publishing and distribution as well as churning out a quantity of anthology comics showcasing their rising stars. The ***Joy Of S*x*** is the theme and title of one such offering



and a joy it is indeed (the mag as well as sex). A mature readers warning accompanies the comic of course, but there is little that would shock most people. An eclectic mix as with most anthologies, but almost everyone treated the subject in a mature and un-self-conscious way. There's no price, but I guess that if you give the L.C.C. a ring on 081 969 4562, they'll be glad to tell you how you can get it (the comic that is).

Bugs and Drugs isn't truly a comic, but as the creators have just secured two pages a month in Deadline and there is a certain comic



element to it, I'm going to review it anyway. Cut up images and savage humour combine to 'demolish serious culture' (the key phrase of the do-it-yourself generation). No future collection of 'zines will be complete without this. Make your cheques payable to C. Weston sending an A5 S.A.E. plus 75p to B&D, P.O. Box 960, Bristol, BS99 5QU.

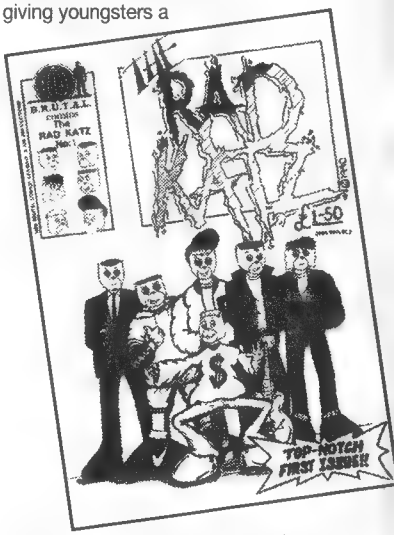
Also from the 'zine scene is ***Arnie***. Ooh, this takes me back to the days when every 'zine was produced by spiky topped punksters and crammed with music, zine reviews and anarchic comics. Follow the adventures of loveable Arnie the @narchist as he fights for the rights of all that's politically correct. The central comic in this is the bee's knees - it's definitely better than any other punk 'zine on the market and it's only 40p - horribly cheap in the tradition of all the best D.I.Y. Write to 16 Palairet Close, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1US and send an A4 S.A.E.

Heading away from anarchic carry-ons, we encounter ***Mondo***. I received issue #17 so it's obviously a stayer. If you harbour any sort of anti-imperialist sentiment this won't appeal to you. In this issue we see the death of the British Bulldog (I wonder where that idea came from) and there is even a Union Jack pennant included for you to wave as the tears stream down your face. This owes a great deal to the big comic companies, so if you are looking for a mainstream comic from alternative artists, send £1.35 + an A4 S.A.E. to North London Comics, 47a Carterhatch Road, Enfield, EN3 5LS.

Rad Katz is an anthropomorphic comic, i.e. all the characters are humanised animals (in this case cats) that follows the fortunes of a band, whose name makes up the title, as they play their biggest gig at the Lower Blenkinsop music festival. The standard of this is much stronger than many such efforts, despite Dave and Nik's lack of confidence expressed in the editorial. My advice is to stop worrying and just get on with it guys. This will appeal to anyone who simply enjoys a good story. Send £1.50 + A5 S.A.E. to B.R.U.T.A.L. Comics, 74a High Road, E. Finchley, London.

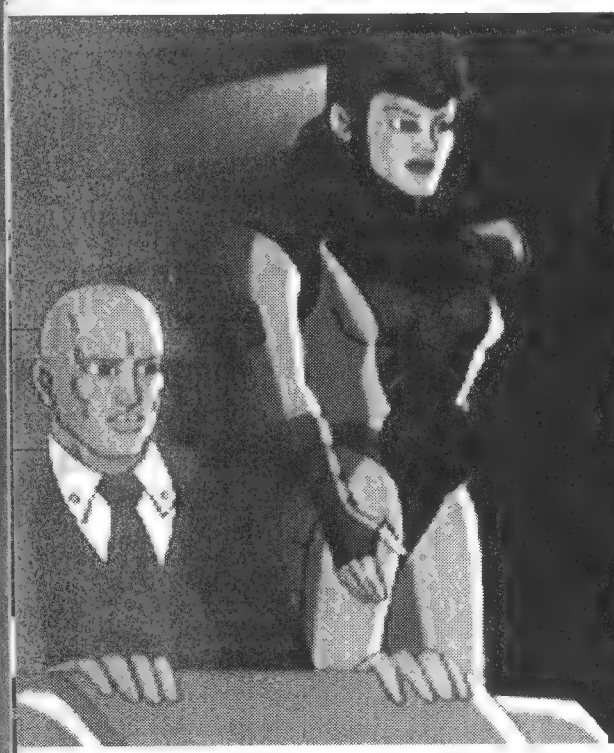
I mentioned Lee Kennedy last month as being featured in *Automatic #2* and no sooner is the ink dry from my printer, than a copy of her latest comic ***Inner City Pagan #2*** flutters my way. Lee's autobiographical vignettes often show the world around her to be a less than ideal place for sensitive and caring humans, such as ourselves. This will appeal to cat lovers, pagans, switchboard operators and anybody else who wants to escape the pressures of city life. Available from Lee Kennedy, 58 Durrington Tower, Westbury, Wandsworth Rd, London, SW8 3LF, this will set you back £2.00 + A4 S.A.E.

Do you remember *Downside*, the comic that took a good long look at Thatcher's Britain? Well, not only has it recently been collected in book format, but the creators are back with a new project. ***Just Say Know*** is a drug information comic, aimed at giving youngsters a



realistic account of what drugs do, with the emphasis on sensible use rather than prohibition. Of course there are plenty of people out there who may be horrified to hear this, but if you start with the premise that most kids are going to encounter drugs at some point, it is surely better to inform them as to the true effects and dangers they may come across. This project is funded by Tower Hamlets Community Drug Team, who provide a community based drug counselling, support and care service. The comic is exceedingly well produced, as anyone who knows Downside would expect and it reads very well, presenting the information with a good mix of entertainment and facts. This is an important comic which will give kids accurate information about what has, for better or worse, become a part of our society. Send £1.00 to THCDT, 71 Johnson Street, Wapping, London, E1 0AQ.

Steve Cook

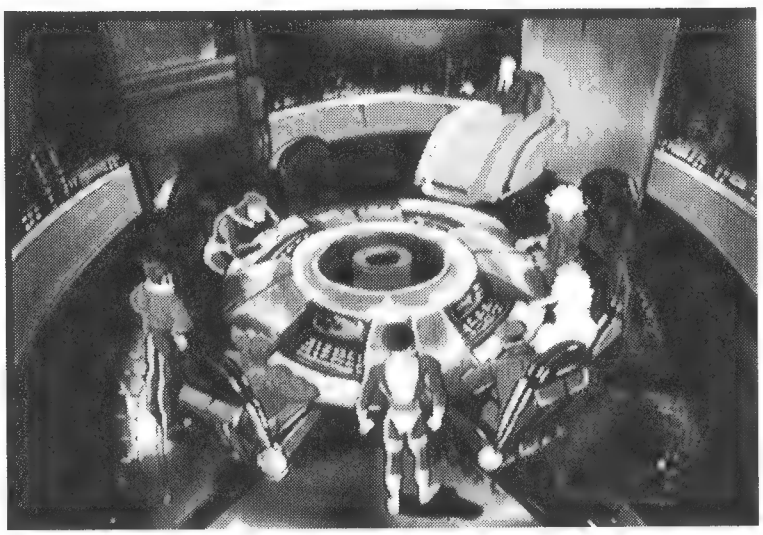


Marvel, Mutants & Mayhe

MARVEL'S MERRY MUTANTS ARE ABOUT TO REACH OUT FROM THE COMIC PAGE AND HIT THE SMALL SCREEN: IN AMERICA, THE ***X-MEN ANIMATED SERIES*** *HAS RAPIDLY BECOME THE TOP-RATED ANIMATED SHOW ON THE FOX NETWORK, AND WILL SHORTLY BE TRANSMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME ON TERRESTRIAL TV IN THE UK (CHANNEL 4 TO YOU AND ME). PUBLISHED TO COINCIDE WITH THE SERIES, BOXTREE ARE RELEASING X-MEN: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE, WRITTEN BY COMIC WORLD REGULAR, JOHN MOSBY, WHO TALKS HERE TO JOE FARRINGALE.*

"There's a good chance that the series will attract high audiences that haven't necessarily been reading the comic-books for ten, twenty, maybe even thirty years," says John Mosby. "What the Guide does is provide a jumping on point for new fans and update the biographies and technical aspects of the X-Men for older fans. The fact is, the X-Men have such a wide audience that it would be impossible - at least in one reasonably sized book - to appeal to every reader. The Guide is simply a way of saying 'Here are some of the main characters you'll need to know about, and here are the reasons they are who they are'."

As well as dealing with the biographies of the main cast, the *Guide* has a chapter on the Mansion and it's contents - the Danger Room, Hangers, Sleeping Quarters and grounds. There's also a look at the history of the comic itself from the early days to the beginning of 1994. "In some ways the history was the most difficult thing to do," John explains, "not because the information wasn't there, but because there was too much. How much could I include and how much do I leave out was the question. What we decided to do was outline the origin of the comic in 1963 and build on the details as we worked through its history. There are some people out there who have followed the team's exploits since the very first issue, but there are more people who have discovered the comic in the last, say, ten years. Consequently the late seventies and early eighties get the biggest share, with details of the creative changes that have been most news-worthy in the early nineties. Again, it comes back to what audience you're aiming at."



Comic World isn't John's only regular market [and we pay him an absolute fortune! - Ed]: in the past three years he has built up a reputation as a regular freelance writer with publications ranging from *Satellite Times* to *Film Review*. Normally the bulk of his articles and interviews based around film and television, but he's also been a comic collector for the past 15 years. So how did this project come about?

"I actually went to Boxtree with a totally different idea which they decided they couldn't pursue at the time. About a week later I got a call

X-MEN © MARVEL COMICS

asking me whether I'd be interested in writing the *Guide*. They'd seen some of my previous magazine work and hired me!"

Normally a book requiring research like this takes about six months. That wasn't a luxury John had:

"I was asked to write what was then called *The Official X-Men Handbook* in early November 1993. The deadline for final copy was the end of December! This was because a transmission date for the tv series had yet to be finalised, but it was known that it would be in early '94. With editing and printing , which obviously takes time, the deadline was a lot tighter than it would normally have been. I think that was one of the reasons I was hired: they didn't just need a writer, they needed someone with a journalistic background who was used to hitting tight deadlines... so they got me!"

THE TWO SERIES HAVE BEEN A MASSIVE SUCCESS AND WE'RE ALREADY WORKING ON THE THIRD

Included in the *Guide* is an episode *guide* to the first two series. Saban Entertainment, who make the animated series, say that there will be more. "There have been twenty-six shows so far, which make up the first two series," explains series producer, Scott Thomas. "We should be making at least 60 episodes and there is talk of specials along the way. The two series have been a massive success and we're already working on the third."

[THE X-MEN] ARE WHATEVER UNDER-DOG YOU WANT THEM TO BE

As usual with any tv adaption, changes between the comic and the series are inevitable and fairly edvident. However, those changes are less dramatic than in previous spin-offs.

"The main line-up for the show is Professor X, Jean Grey, Cyclops, Gambit, Wolverine, Rogue, Storm, and the first show introduces Jubilee. There are appearances over the first two seasons of other comic regulars, Colossus, Magneto, Cable and Bishop. Some of the dynamics have changed, but the idea remains the same. It's a little like looking at one of the *What If...* realities, except we get the rare chance of watching the alternative events play out over a longer period of time."

That seems to have been one of the attractions fo the series. In most animated shows, the stories are self-contained: what happens in one episode rarely affects what happens on the next. With *X-Men: The Animated Series*, however, audiences get the chance to see the characters progress and grow through storylines that take a few episodes to complete, or even the whole series. It's a little like watching *St. Elsewhere* or *Roseanne*...there's the episode's main theme, but lots of sub-plots running through at the same time. Ironically the comic book itself is often credited with those qualities.

The show by its very nature and target audience, can't be quite as hard-hitting as the comic book, but it pushes some of the issues that other's wouldn't. Wolverine is as mean as in the comic book , through (predictably) the violence has to be less graphic. This doesn't stop the show from tackling issues such as prejudice.

"In all honesty, I think that's one of the reasons that the X-Men have always been popular," agrees John. "They are whatever underdog you want them to be, any type of person or minority that is unfairly treated. The comic may vary in quality from time to time, but everyone has had a time in their lives when they feel that the world is against them or that they're being treated unfairly.

"On the flip-side, most people can think of a time when they've treated someone else like that. Readers see in the X-Men a group of people who have the same type of problems. Sure, some of them can fly, some can teleport, some can wear the most flimsy costumes and never catch a cold, but the writing on the X-Men has always been about how the individuals duel with the problems they face. We all wish we could fly or possess super-strength, but characters like that are ten-a-penny in comics. The X-Men provide us some of the most *human* heroes in comics.

"I recently re-read the X-Men graphic novel *God Loves, Man Kills*. That, for me, is quintessential X-Men. That's what sums up what and why the team are who they are."

The animated series has recently been part of Sky One's weekend line-up, but though the number of satellite watchers is growing, the Channel 4 show will be able to reach a much larger audience. The *Guide* itself will be advertised on television after the show, so each will benefit from the other.

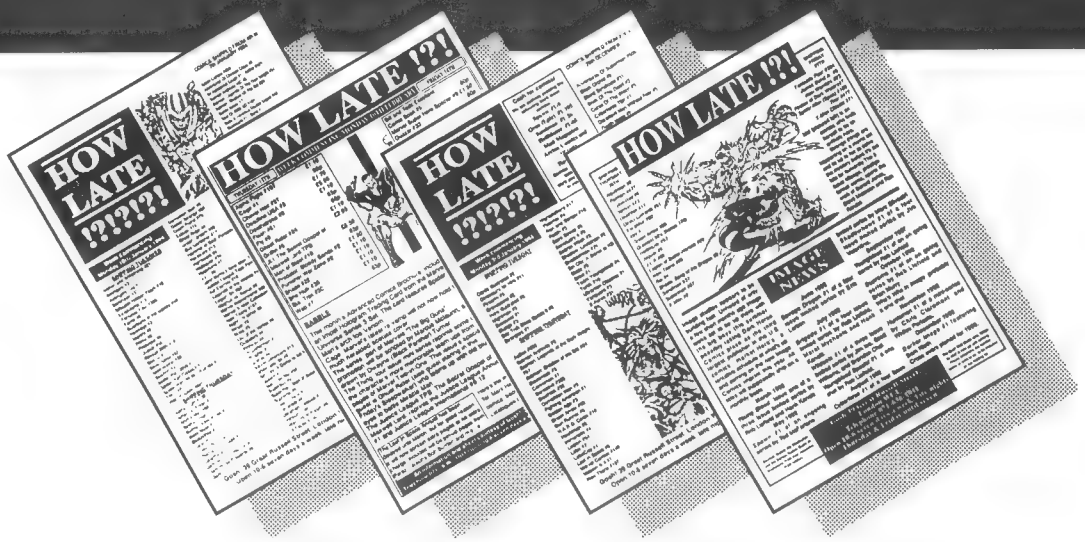
In writing the 20,000 word *Guide*, which will be fully illustrated in both colour and b/w, John discovered a number of X-fans amongst his colleagues. "Scott (Thomas) and Tim (Quinn, from Marvel UK) were particularly helpful in tracking down sources and generally smoothing the way for me. Without them, the job would have been impossible. Paul Birch and Steve Holland also lent me a great deal of stuff to help chase up references, so I owe them a big thank-you as well."

Boxtree hopes that the *Guide* will lead to other similar projects. The company has specialised in tv/cult tie-ins and has made a reputation for itself since the mid-eighties against strong competition. "We were hoping that it would be out in time for the Glasgow convention, which would have been a great place to launch it, but it's now been rescheduled" explains John - the book now set to appear on April 28.

This won't be John's last foray into the world of book publishing: "It will be interesting to see how it does. In some ways it's a whole new ball game for me, but it's been fun. There are some irons in the fire, but I won't jinx them by mentioning what they are. Primarily I'm a magazine journalist, but there's a great appeal about doing something a bit different, stretching yourself."

Whatever else 1994 brings, it looks like it will be a successful year for Mutants, for Marvel, and for Mosby. CW

A free weekly guide to next week's comics



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BOOKS

Anthony, Piers *Bio of a Space Tyrant 4: Executive*. HarperCollins, £4.99. Reprint.
Anthony, Piers *Bio of a Space Tyrant 5: Statesman*. HarperCollins, £4.99. Reprint.
Anthony, Piers & Robert E. Margroff *Mouvar's Magic*. HarperCollins, £4.99.
Appleyard, Bryan *The First Church of the New Millenium*. Doubleday UK (hc).
Aycliffe, Jonathan *Whispers in the Dark*. HarperCollins. Reprint horror novel.
Baker, Nicholson *The Fermata*. Chatto & Windus (hc).
Baker, Will *Shadow Hunters*. Roc, £4.99. The animal kingdom rises against humanity, and the grim impasse the two sides reach is threatened when Ginks, hybrid ape-humans, kidnap the son of a high-ranked government official.
Belle, Pamela *The Silver City*. Pan, £8.99 (tpb). The silver city of Zithirian is threatened by the barbaric Ska'i hordes and the rivalry of its two royal sons. Drawn into the intrigue by chance, Halthis has to decide who deserves her loyalty. The first of a fantasy trilogy.
Bradley, Marion Zimmer *The Firebrand*. Penguin, £5.99. Epic retelling of the Fall of Troy legend from the point of view of Kassandra, princess of Troy, the battle becoming not a romantic clash for the favours of Helen, but an all-too-human struggle.
Brite, Poppy Z. *Lost Souls*. Penguin, £5.99. A dark fantasy about the orphaned Baby Nothing, found with a note pinned to her basket in Marylebone Station. Outside of that, any similarity to the life of Paddington Bear is non-existent, and Brite carves out a haunting vampire story.
Card, Orson Scott *The Call of Earth*. Legend.
Card, Orson Scott *The Ships of Earth*. Legend (hc/tpb).
Carter, Carmen *Star Trek, the Next Generation: The Devil's Heart*. Pocket, £4.50. TV series tie-in.
Compton, D.G. *Nomansland*. Gollancz, £4.99. An appalling reality plague has changed the face of civilization. Dr Harriet Ryder-Kahn thinks she has the answer, but finds there are those who do not want a solution and will go to any lengths to silence her.
Cornell, Paul *No Future*. Doctor Who Books, £4.99. Fifth and last in a series in which the Doctor's past has been tampered with by an unknown enemy and the Doctor finds himself in a warped version of 1976 London.
Crichton, Michael *Travels*. Pan, £5.99 (tpb). Non-fiction, relating Crichton's life as a medical student and his travels to Tahiti, New Guinea, Zaire, and elsewhere.
Daniel, Tony *Warpath*. Millenium, £4.99. In a future where men can be 'transmitted' across the galaxy, Will James finds himself reborn on the planet Candle where he befriends The Wanderer, and a strange young woman who may not be entirely human.
De Haven, Tom *The End-Of-Everything Man*. Roc, £4.99. The second volume of De Haven's 'Chronicle's of King's Tramp', the follow-up to *Walker of Worlds* whose hero, Jack, returns to his native Lostwithal to save the land from the coming of the monstrous Epicene.
Dicks, Terrance *The Robots of Death*. Target, £3.99. Reprint of Tom Baker adventure from 1977.
Donaldson, Stephen *The Second Chronicles of Thomas the Covenant the Unbeliever*. HarperCollins, £9.99. Omnibus.
Donnelly, Joe *Still Life*. Legend. Reprint horror novel.
Duane, Diane & Peter Morwood *seaQuest DSV: The Novel*. Millenium, £4.99. Novel based on the pilot show of the Universal/Amblin tv series.
Eddings. David *The Shining Ones*. HarperCollins, £8.99 (tpb). Book Two of The Tamuli; the Shining Ones are luminous beings. Fighting to save the Tamul Empire, Sparhawk once again uses the awful power of the Bhelliom.
Erskine, Barbara *Midnight is a Lonely Place*. HarperCollins, £14.99 (hc). A successful writer moves to an East Anglian cottage where, cut off from the modern world, she becomes the focus for an ancient battle.
Frost, Gregory *The Pure Cold Light*. Roc, £4.99. Sinister corporation ScumberCorp is involved in producing a psychoactive drug, Orbitol. An investigative journalist unearths a high-tech conspiracy after pursuing the enigmatic Angel Rueda, chased by ScumberCorp. **Mix of cyberpunk and *noir*** thriller.
Gaiman, Neil & various *Sandman: Fables & Reflections*. Titan, £12.50 (tpb). Graphic collection containing stories from *Vertigo Preview*, *Sandman #29-31,38-40,50* and *Sandman Special #1*, introduced by Gene Wolfe.
Greenland, Colin *Harm's Way*. HarperCollins, £4.99. Reprint.
Gross, Ed & Mark Altman *Star Trek: Captain's Log Supplement*. Boxtree, £9.99 (tpb). Non-fiction. Behind the scenes of the 6th series with in-depth interviews with cast and crew.
Guest, Diane *The Nightwalker*. HarperCollins. Reprint Virginia Andrews-esque 'children in peril' horror novel. Something evil is stalking Clairemont, and only Gillian Norlund can bring together the shattered household she once lived in.
Haldeman, Jack C. *Star Trek Adventure 4: Perry's Planet*. Titan. TV series tie-in.
Hugh, Daffyd AB *Star Trek, Deep Space Nine 5: Fallen Heroes*. Pocket, £4.50. TV series tie-in.
Huxley, Aldous *After Many A Summer*. Flamingo, £5.99. A scientist seeking to prolong human life is confronted by a bicentarian whose own experiments in longevity tell him all he needs to know.
Huxley, Aldous *Brave New World Revisited*. Flamingo, £4.99. Twenty Six years after the publication of *Brave New World* Huxley returned to the subject to check his prophecies against reality, finding many of his predictions coming true.
Huxley, Aldous *Island*. Flamingo, £5.99. Huxley's last novel, a utopian vision of mankind.
Huxley, Aldous *Time Must Have A Stop*. Flamingo, £5.99. Huxley's exploration of reality seen through the death of Eustace Barnack.
Kay, Guy Gavriel *Tigana*. Roc, £5.99. Fantasy: a battle between King Valentin of Tigana and the wicked Wizard King Brandin of Ygrath leaves Brandin's son dead. In revenge he casts a spell over Tigana so that no-one can remember its beauty and traquility before the time of Brandin. Except one determined group.
Laws, Stephen *Ghost Train*. New English Library, £5.99. Reprint horror novel.
Laws, Stephen *Gideon*. New English Library, £5.99. Reprint horror novel.
Laws, Stephen *Spectre*. New English Library, £5.99. Reprint horror novel.
Laws, Stephen *The Wyrm*. New English Library, £5.99. Reprint horror novel.
Little, Bentley *The Mailman*. Headline, £16.99 (hc). There's a new mailman in Willis. Bills start to go missing, personal letters are rerouted, secrets start becoming public knowledge...and people start dying.
Lumley, Brian *Return of the Deep Ones*. Roc, £4.99. A welcome collection from Lumley, best know for his *Necroscope* novels, which gathers together four horror tales based around Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos.
McCaffrey, Anne *Damia's Children*. Corgi, £4.99. Third book in The Tower and The Hive series. Damia and Afra-Raven-Lyon reared six children, paired with the furry, one-eyed Mrdinis, the only sentient beings who could communicate with humans. Now, four of the children must play a part in the exploration of an alien hive ship.
McCaffrey, Anne *Lyon's Pride*. Bantam, £14.99 (hc). Volume 4 of the Tower and the Hive series. Man and Mrdini are threatened by Hivers and their huge Sphere ships.
McCaffrey, Anne & Jody Lynn Nye *Treaty Planet*. Orbit, £16.99/£4.99 (hc/pb). The sequel to *Crisis on Doona*. A seemingly unarmed spaceship in orbit around Doonarrala is to some an opportunity to extend the hand of friendship, to others a threat that must be eliminated.
McCay, Bill *Stan Lee's Riftworld: Villains*. Virgin, £4.99. Second in the series of novels based around Lee's concept of superheroes in the real world; here they plan to take over the whole planet.
Maginn, Simon *Sheep*. Corgi, £4.99. Original horror novel, Maginn's first, selected for the W.H. Smith fresh talent promotion.
Modesitt, L.E. Jr. *The Magic of Recluse*. Orbit, £5.99. 500-page fantasy novel.
Perry, Steve *Aliens: Nightmare Asylum*. Millenium, £4.99. Billie, Wilks and Mitch return to Earth to find it overrun by Aliens, the only way to go is to find the remnants of humanity in deep space only to fall prey to General Spears who plans to train Aliens to re-capture Earth.
Pringle, Dave [Ed.] *Dark Future: Route 666*. Boxtree.
Pringle, Dave [Ed.] *Warhammer: Ignorant Armies*. Boxtree. Role-playing game tie-in.
Ramland, Katherine *The Vampire Companion: The Official Guide to Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles*. Orbit, £16.99 (hc). Non-fiction. An encyclopedic guide to Anne Rice's Vampire Lestat novels, with comments and revelations from Rice herself.
Reichert, Mickey Zucker *Child of Thunder*. Millenium, £15.99/£8.99 (hc/tpb). Follow-up to *The Last of the Renshai* and *The Western Wizard*, Colby, the last of the Renshai, now faces the Seven Tasks of Wizardry to learn if he is truly the next Western Wizard.
Reichert, Mickey Zucker *The Last of the Renshai*. Millenium, £4.99 Reprint, first novel in the Renshai series.
Robitaille, Julie *Quantum Leap: The Beginning*. Boxtree, £3.99. TV tie-in.
Robitaille, Julie *Quantum Leap:*

MULTIMEDIA CONTINUED

The Ghost and the Gumshoe. Boxtree, £3.99. TV tie-in.

Shepherd, Lucius *The Golden*. Millenium, £5.99 (tpb). Remarkable and lyrical novel about vampire culture at their Peake-esque Castle Banat stronghold. It's also a murder mystery. Recommended.

Shepard, Lucius *The Ends of the Earth*. Millenium, £15.99/£8.99 (hc/tpb). World Fantasy Award winning collection of stories including two novellas, **The Scalehunter's Beautiful Daughter** and the title story.

Shippey, Tom [Ed.] *The Oxford Book of Fantasy Stories*. OUP (hc). Companion to the earlier anthology of SF stories.

Simon, Leonard *Disassociated States*. Penguin, £4.99. Psychological thriller in the vein of *Silence of the Lambs*: two psychiatrists examine the mind of a multiple-killer trying to root out the root of his multiple personality disorder. Is it an illness or is Felix Kiehl totally insane? The only thing anyone agrees on is that he's disappeared.

Somtow, S.P. *Riverrun*. Orbit, £4.99. The power of the truthsayer slumbers deep in Theo Etchison, a power for which Thorn, the Darkling vampire has a burning need, for Darklings use dreams as weapons.

Stine, R.L. *Fear Street: The Overnight*. Archway, £2.99. Young adult horror series.

Stewart, Michael *Compulsion*. HarperCollins (hc). Horror novel.

Strickland, Brad *Star Trek, Deep Space Nine 1: The Star Ghost*. Archway, £2.99. Young adult series.

Sutin, Lawrence *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick*. HarperCollins. Non-fiction look at the author whose work seems so popular with the film industry at the moment.

Suster, Gerald *The Devil's Maze*. Roc, £4.99. Lit by the flaring gaslights of Victorian London, Dr Lipsius's band of satanic aesthetes prey on the poor in pursuit of the forbidden pleasures of sorcery and murder.

Swanwick, Michael *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*. Millenium, £8.99 (tpb). Jane, the changeing child kidnapped to work in the iron dragon workhouse, discovers a grimoir and escapes with one of the iron beasts. Perpetually bound to the dragon, her adventures are set in a world of rich, wild magic.

Vardeman, Robert E. *The Accursed*. New English Library £7.99. Trilogy of three short novels, *The Lord of Death and Life*, *Legion of the Air* and *The Flame Spectre*, here published in one volume. Brion Rouwen, Captain of the Intrepid Guard is cursed with immortality by the wizard Kwuway, is betrayed, and battles to restore the balance of the elements which threaten his world with doom.

Weis, Margaret & Tracy Hickman *The Hand of Chaos*. Bantam, £4.99. Fifth book in the Deathgate Cycle. Chaos is everywhere, and the Lord of the Nexus orders his servant and the human child, Bane, to further their master's evil work.

Wolfe, Gene *Lake of the Long Sun*. Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99 (hc). Second volume in the *Book of the Long Sun* series. Patera Silk continues his quest that will reveal the secrets of his world - unknown to him, a vast cylindrical spaceship - discovers an entrance to the sub-surface passages of the ship. Beautifully written by Wolfe, best known for his *Book of the New Sun* series.

Zelazny, Roger & Robert Sheckley *Bring Me the Head of Prince Charming*. Pan (tpb). Reprint novel.

The Best of Star Trek, The Next Generation. Titan, £9.99 (tpb). Graphic collection reprinting DC's *ST, TGG #s 5-6,19* and *Annuals #1-2*, introduced by Jeri Taylor, executive producer of the series.

FILMS

Releases: While everyone else is sitting through three hours of **Schindler's List** in Screen One, join the queue over at screen three (or whatever) and annoy the hell out of the filmgoers by yelping along to Steven Seagal's **On Deadly Ground**, in which he plays the enviromentally-friendly Lone Wolf against (boo, hiss) Michael Caine, with Joan Chen as the Seagal-friendly female and lots of martial-action.

News: Star Trek: The Next Generation movie will be directed by David Carson whose credits include the pilot of **Deep Space Nine...The Incredible Hulk** may make it back to the screen in 1995, but as a computer-generated alter-ego to Bruce Banner...and **She-Hulk** television series may not be such an impossibility...William Gibson comes to the big screen for the first time (having failed as scripter of *Alien 3*) with a film based on his story **Johnny Mnemonic** starring Dolph Lundgren and Ice T...Robin Williams looks set to be The Riddler in the forthcoming **Batman 3**...and Renny *(Die Hard 2, Cliffhanger)* Hardin could be directing live-action **Thunderbirds**, a rumoured $40m movie-in-development...and if that wasn't enough the success of **The Fugitive** has sent Hollywood moguls racing for the TV vaults, and **The Prisoner** (ITV, $25m), **The Saint** (Paramount, $35m) and **The Fugitive** (Carolco, $?m) are all in developement...and **The Crow** *will* be released after all. A finished print was screened for Miramax executives on January 20, and a release date set: Friday the 13th of May...

Sequels and Remakes: Chris Thompson, whose credits include *Mork & Mindy* and *Laverne & Shirley* is currently writing the sequel to **Who Framed Roger Rabbit?**. Two earlier scripts by others were abandoned...Terry Hayes, who wrote *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* is the scriptwriter on the Oliver Stone produced **Planet of the Apes...**talking of which, Pierre Boulle, author of *La planete des singes* in 1963, translated as *Planet of the Apes* in America and *Monkey Planet* in the UK, died on January 31. Boulle, born in 1912, was best known as the author of *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1954), and the sf author tag was an annoying one to him as the *Planet of the Apes* sequence of films, which began in 1968, owed little to his ironic, compassionate novel...Jess Whedon is the first scriptwriter to tackle **Alien 4** (expect some re-writes on that one) with Fox trying to woo Sigourney back to the role of Ripley...Chris *(Home Alone)* Columbus will be behind the helm for **Theatre of Blood**, originally made in 1973 with the late Vincent Price and (wait for it) **Fantastic Four**. The recently completed Roger Corman/Concorde FF movie, which was due to premiere on January 19th, and had a trailer already in circulation, has been scrapped totally, and is unlikely to ever be seen: Neue-Constantin, who own the rights to the characters, made the decision on December 28th, much to the dismay of the films makers, preferring to leave the way clear for the planned $40m 20th Century Fox feature which Columbus may begin at the end of 1994...John Carpenter is the director for the remake of **Village of the Damned** from a script by Carpenter & David Himmelstein...and *Cliffhanger*'s Renny Harlin directs **The Day the Earth Caught Fire** from a Lem Dobbs script...**Children of the Corn III** has just begun production...**Highlander III** is shooting up in Scotland even as you read this...but you'll have to wait for **Rambo IV**, which might now happen...

VIDEO

Dennis. Warner (PG). Directed by John Hughes, starring Mason Gamble as comicstrip terror, Dennis, a cute-but-deadly six-year-old out to make life hell for Walter Matthau. Rental. 92m. *Mar 18*

InnerSpace. Warner (PG). Directed by Joe Dante, starring Dennis Quaid, Martin Short, Meg Ryan. Screen Classics (£6.99) re-release of humorous *Fantastic Voyage* accidental trip through the body of a supermarket clerk. 114m. *Mar 7*

Under Siege. Warner (18). Directed by Andrew Davis, starring Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones. Nicknamed 'Die Hard at Sea', this is Seagal's best actioner to date; he plays a cook aboard a hijacked battleship with a nuclear arsenal. Lee outacts Seagal easily - if Seagal can be said to act, but there are plenty of explosions to disguise his lack of abilities. 98m. *Mar 7*

News: the latest Dr Who videos from BBC are *The Green Death* and *Arc of Infinity*, both released March 7, starring Jon Pertwee and Peter Davison respectively from shows first seen in 1973 and 1983. And there's over nine hours of Stephen King films from Warner with the release of **Salem's Lot** and **A Return to Salem's Lot** on one double-bill, 202-minute video, plus The Tommyknockers, in its original 170-minute extended version, and **IT** weighing in at 180-minutes, all priced £9.99. Warner have inexplicably cancelled the release of **Lois & Clark**, but if you're a fan of Teri Hatcher you can rent her in **All Tied Up** (1992, 15), a teen comedy behind a sleazy sleeve.

ANIME

News: Future releases from Kiseki include **Adventure Kid** (Volume One, £8.99), **Black Magic M-66** (15, £8.99) and a subtitled version of **Urotsukidoji III: Return of the Overfiend.** The dubbed video has been further delayed until April release due, we believe, to problems with its certification, although a recent press-release gives an 18 certificate and a March 21 release date for Episode One (53 minutes, £9.99). Episode Two is still awaiting certification, but could be out on April 25. A subtitled version will be released later this year. **The Gigolo** (18, £8.99) should be available as you read this.

Meanwhile, Manga Video have **The Guyver Data 1: Genesis of Guyver** lined up for April 11, the first of 12 monthly parts, all of which will include a chapter of Alan Grant & Tony Luke's 'Hellkatt' comic strip (see panel). The live action **Gunhed,** currently on a limited tour of cinemas, will be released on video in June.

Two new companies are about to enter the market: Crusader Video release the warm and cuddly **Catgirl: Nuku-Nuku** on March 21 whose life is certainly not dull: a helicopter gunship rakes her school on her first day, her trip to the seaside is interrupted by a robot octopus and giant robots attack her family. Just another day in the life of a 14-year-old female human/cat/android.

Pioneer LDC will be begin a programme of releasing PAL format OAV's in the UK this spring or summer, beginning with **Techimuyo! Ryo Oh Ki** (No Need For Tenchi!) part 1, *Ryoko Resurrected*. They have already announced some 40 titles for release in the USA, at least two of which (**Giant Robo** and **Ambassador Magma**) are produced in conjunction with LA Hero - who have an exclusive distribution deal with Kinseki (see

this column last month), so some releases as yet unavailable in the UK may be available, if you catch my drift.

D-CONTanimeT 1994 is set for Friday October 14 through Sunday October 16 at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, with advance membership set at £15 per person (over 12s only) until April 31. More info from L. Sharman, 13 Prescott Close, Banbury, Oxon. OX16 0RD (remember an SSAE) or on 0295-256284.

Laughing Target (Manga, 15). Directed by Motosuke Takahashi. Second round of the *Rumik World* sequence, a story of betrayal and unrequited love as Yuzuru tries to discover the dark secrets of his childhood love, Azusa.

The Professional Golgo 13 (Manga, 18). Directed by Osamu Dezaki. Based on a story by Takao Saito, the nameless assassin casually puts down the son of wealthy oil baron in Californian before moving to Sydney for his next contract, to find the killer of a slaughtered family. The action moves to Sicily on the trail of a Mafia hit-man - or woman...Golgo's ex-lover. 93m. *Mar 14*

TELEVISION

Rumours about an Amblin/Universal (the team behind **seaQuest DSV**) taking out an option on **Doctor Who** have been confirmed by the BBC who are currently negotiating a co-production. Thankfully David Hasselhoff isn't involved. Three names rumoured to be involved: Jeremy (*Sherlock Holmes*) Brett, Michael (*Frank, Phantom*) Crawford, and Richard (*Rocky Horror, Crystal Maze*) O'Brien but these are simply rumours as no-one has been approached as yet. Nothing is expected to appear until 1995. This is for a TV show, not a movie, the option on which was sold in 1988; the rights are now with Lumiere Pictures who are in seperate negotiations with the BBC which have nothing to do with the Amblin project.

Gerry Anderson made a two-minute trailor for **Space Police** at Pinewood studio in an effort to get backing for the series which has been mooted for many years. It seems to have worked, and Space Productions have a deal with Grove Television in the USA who will underwrite the $30m series of 24 one-hour shows. This is the first positive results of the current Anderson revival, which will include a BBC reshowing of **Joe 90** in the near future (and an accompanying comic, of course).

AUDIO

Isis Audio are bringing out the **Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy** unabridged and read by Douglas Adams on 4 casettes, priced £14.99 in April, running some 5 hours of tape. Also released in April is **The Restaurant at the End of the Universe**, with **Life, the Universe, and Everything, So Long and Thanks for All the Fish** and **Mostly Harmless** following in May and June.

Always controversial, Savoy are releasing **Savoy Wars** on CD on March 28, including such controversial cuts as the Savoy-Hitler Youth Band version of 'Blue Monday', P.J. Proby's 'Sign of the Times', 'Garbageman', 'In the Air Tonight', 'I'm On Fire' and 'Hardcore', and more for £11.95.

GAMES

The Sierra Games PC/CD game **Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers** release was accompanied by a small, 30-page, glossy comic book by Jane Jensen and Terese Nielson, with a cover by Dave McKean. The game itself is described as a neo-gothic thriller which begins with a nightmare and cuts to modern New Orleans where hero Gabriel Knight becomes involved in ritual Voodoo murders, which become inexplicably linked with his nightmare and raises questions about Knight's own origins. Featuring impressive high-resolution 3-D graphics, the game retails at £39.99. See panel.

The European **Gen Con '94** will be held at Pontin's Holiday Centre, Camber Sands, moved from the chilly November schedule to May 12-15. Accomodation can be booked and further information from Denise on 0223 212517.

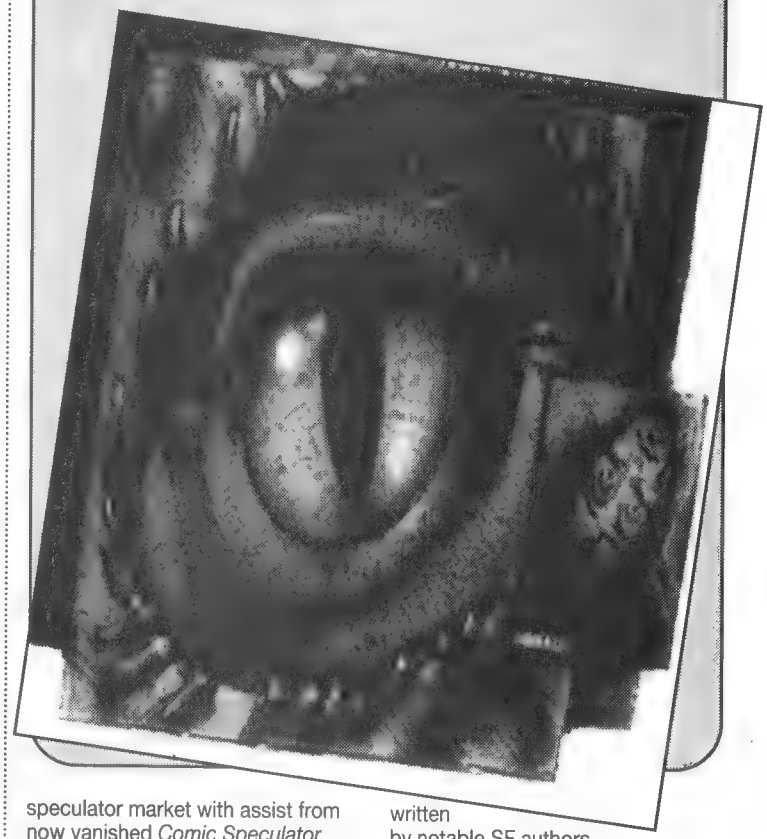
Sega release **Ren & Stimpy Show Presents: Stimpy's Invention** on Sega Mega Drive in March, priced £44.99

GABRIEL KNIGHT

New Orleans, the city that never sleeps, is on edge as a serial killer stalks through the night, selecting victims by chance or design. Gabriel Knight, owner of St George's Bookshop and himself an author, is drawn into the murder inquiries through his friendship with the police detective in the case, Mosley, his knowledge of voodoo (the murders take the form of voodoo rites) and his tenuous link with the seemy side of cultish involvement.

In the game you control the Gabriel through his research into the murders, discovering clues by talking to other characters as they appear on the scene. As you discover new information, such as a name, or place, an identification icon appears on one of two maps you hold of the French Quarter and Greater New Orleans area. This gives you extra locations to explore whilst keeping the game scrolling along at a pace that is slowly building in intensity and perculating your adrenaline.

The backdrop artwork and set design merge into a familiarity closely resembling that found in graphic novels, thus creating a realistic atmosphere where you personally feel involved in the investigation that is rapidly heading for the seedy side of the city where it seems everyone has a dark side and a sinister secret to hide (and for you to discover).



MAGAZINES RECEIVED

Animace #3 (Feb 1994). £1.00. Anime fanzine; includes short interviews with Ben Dunn and Fred Perry of Antarctic Press, reviews of videos and console games, memories of Contanimated, a wicked Samurai Pizza Cats strip and some excellent fan art. Paul Cook, 5 Brookland, Tiptree, Colchester, Essex CO5 0BU.

The Comic Book Price Guide Update 1993/1994. £1.95. Major undertaking aimed at the dying speculator market with assist from now vanished *Comic Speculator News*, but packed with train-spotter comic information too good to miss, plus an X-Men index and other gestating features, market reports which say glut, GLUT, *GLUT!*, and some nice colour pics.

Paperbacks, Pulps & Comics #1. £3.95 (+50p p&p). The old *Paperback, Pulp & Comic Collector* in a new squarebound format, running to 140 pages and a full-colour cover. Features on Blue Beetle, Gerald Kersh, John W. Campbell, Frank Bonham, David Boyce, Thorpe & Porter, pulp-Lassie White Phantom, and a lengthy look at the US comic books written by notable SF authors. Recommended. Zeon Publishing, 2 Whitecroft, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, Wilts. BA13 4DJ.

TripWire (Feb/Mar 1994). £1.50. Slightly revamped presentation, but old favourites still appear: downbeat reviews for *Mystery Play* and *Purr*, upbeat Best-of-the-Year features, Warren Ellis' barbed-wire fill-in for Mark Millar, a Bisley interview by Grant Morrison and, in the records, a review of Snoop Doggy Dog that astonishingly gives the album (**) when it should be ( ). Joel Meadows, 4[1] Parkside, Mill Hill, London NW7 2LN.

TRADING CARDS

Skybox have just released **The Simpsons** with art from Bongo Comics maester, Matt Groening, a 90-card set with bonus magic motion and glow-in-the-dark cards, puzzles and exchange cards to redeem against original Groening sketches. Also forthcoming for May is a 90-card **Bone Collector Cards** set, which will include chase cards and 100 card-sized original sketches by creator Jeff Smith. **The Brothers Hildebrandt Collectors Cards** (Comic Images) are released in April featuring 90 collaborations of the award-winning fantasy artists Greg Hildebrandt and twin brother Tim, along with subsets of original art and signed cards.

EVENTS

19 Mar **Manchester**. Parkers Hotel, Corporation Street. Comic Mart.
19-20 Mar **GLASGOW COMIC ART CONVENTION.** Clyde Hall, Clyde Street. Advance Membership: L10 weekend or £7.50 per day. Guests: Jeff Smith, Steve Englehart, Teddy Kristiansen, Hermann Huppen, Eddie Campbell. Info: Rusty Staple Ltd., PO Box 146, Glasgow G1 1TR.
19 Mar-16 Apr **Southport.** Atkinson Art Gallery, Lord Street. Exhibition of artwork by Carl Critchlow, who has contributed to Marvel UK and *2000AD*. Entry is free. You can ger more details by contacting the gallery on 0704 533 133.
26 Mar **Nottingham.** Victoria Leisure Centre, Gelding Street. Comic Mart
1-4 Apr **SOU'WESTER: EASTERCON '94.** Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. SF Con. Membership: £25 attending, £10 supporting. Guests: Barbara Hambly, Neil Gaiman, Diane Duane, Peter Morwood. Info: Eastercon '94, c/o 3 W. Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol BS6 6SZ.
9 Apr **Birmingham.** Carrs Lane Church Centre. Comic Mart & Film Fair.
16 Apr **Leeds.** Brunswick Hall, Leeds Metropolitan University, Merrion Way. Comic Mart.
17 Apr **London.** TUC Centre, Great Russell Street. Comic Mart. Deborah Hyde will also be signing copies of her Jack the Ripper trading card set, *Autumn of Fear*.
23 Apr **Manchester.** Sachas Hotel, Tibb Street, Piccadilly. Comic & Card Mart.
20 Apr **Sheffield.** Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street. Comic Mart & Film Fair.

HELLKATT

Since our interview with Tony Luke in issue #16 a lot has happened on the increasingly blurred border of comic's East-West divide. Tony, along with Alan Grant, were the spearhead of a British invasion on the Japanese market which has seen half-a-dozen UK creators find a home for strips within the telephone book sized Manga which are a regular sight in the hands of businessmen commuting to work. Even BBC2 has woken up to Anime with a showing of *Akira* recently. How then, does Tony feel now about his ground-breaking role as artist on the 11-part Dominator strip which has successfully begun in *Comic Afternoon*?

"I was astonished," he says. "And Kodansha want me to carry on working for them in the future. I'm working on a new series in the Renga format of full-page artwork with no text. The working title for the series was Sin 7, based on the seven deadly sins, but they now want 88 sins. All female."

The Dominator has proven a major success, not only being the first original western strip to appear in a Manga, but the first to cross-over with a Japanese character, and the first to generate his own T-Shirt.

Tony has been splitting his time between work in Japan and work for the UK, having produced two episodes and a cover for the forthcoming Judge Anderson series in the Judge Dredd Megazine as well as a 12-part strip for Manga video: "When it became apparent that The Guyver was going to be coming out on a monthly basis, the idea was to boost the package by having two pages of comic strip every month." Again written by Alan Grant, 'Hellkatt' debuts in April on the inside cover of the Anime video series. There are links with The Dominator strip which will only become apparent later, Hellkatt herself being half human, half demon, a corporate demon hunter on a six-figure salary with a penthouse in Docklands.

A fan of Japanese art since college, he believes that the amalgamation of traditional British comics and Japanese Manga can produce "a very different, fresh style. Manga Mania has been one of the things responsible for alerting people to the fact that the whole genre is much bigger than some people previously suspected. The trouble with the British market is that it's very compartmentalised; you only have to look at music to see that. But people will eventually become more liberal and see there's a lot more to than first meets the eye. It's the old prejudice about animation being kid's stuff - the old problem with comics. It's difficult to get past that snobbery. If everyone would just relax a little more, a lot more people would have a lot more fun!"

Following Sin...88 and counting, his next project will be to write a series for a Japanese artist. In the meantime he's very happy working with Kodansha: "They encourage at every opportunity, come up with ideas...the level of courtesy, guidance and feedback is very, very high. It's a genuine pleasure to work for them."

Multi-Media was compiled by Chris Davis, Alan Dobson, Steve Holland, Dave Mackintosh, Pete Taylor, and a cast of thousands (press releases). Please send information and review material to Comic World, Castle House, 97 High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1TH.

FOR SALE

ABBREVIATIONS

THIS IS A LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS YOU MAY FIND IN THE CLASSIFIEDS & LISTING SECTIONS

M.	Mint Perfect
N.M.	Nearly Mint
V.F./V.F.N.	Very Fine
F.N.	Fine
V.G.	Very Good
G.	Good
F.	Fair
P.	Poor
B.S.	Bookshop Stamp on Cover
T.S.	Taped Spine
R.S.	Rolled Spine
M.C.	Marked Cover
W.B.	Water Bent
P.S.	Price Stamp

• **I'VE STILL** got piles of comics from all publishers to clear before I can use our spare bedroom. Send 2 first class stamps for my lists. Brian Watson, Harrowden, 39 High Street, Sutton, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2RA. (9)

• **FUNNY PAGES** mega sale. All titles in massive 40-page catalogue slashed to half price for limited period, incredible bargains, see for yourself. Send 28p A4 SAE for free list plus free trading cards to: Funny Pages, 7 Churchill Way, Corsham, Wilts SN13 0EB. (4)

• **CLASSIC CAR** enthusiasts 1000s of Classic Cars, Parts, Services, and accessories are packed into the new Classic Car Mart magazine. Pick up a copy for just £1.50 from all good newsagents. (5)

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• **TINTIN EXPLORERS** on the Moon 1959 £20, Tintin in Tibet 1962 £20. Thunderbirds Annual 1968 £20. TV21 Annual 1968 £15. 2000 AD Annual 1985 £7. Captain Scarlet Annual 1967 (first ever!) £30. Phone Bridget Adams (0734) 790623 after 4pm. (4)

• **TRADING CARDS** for sale. any card (single) = 10p. All sets priced as in Cards Illustrated $1 = 65p. Most sets and chase cards available eg Spiderman, Rockcards, plasm, write to Steve, 25 Carfax Avenue, Tongham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 1BD. (7)

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• **2000AD COMICS** Issue 1-428 complete, plus 1977 summer special, 1980 sci-fi special, 1981-83 Judge Dredd annuals. 1982-83 2000AD annuals, all in very good condition. Offers! Tel: 061-747 4033 ask for Stuart. Will not split. (5)

• **BEST OF** both worlds, new mail order list out now includes comics (new and old) trading cards, videos, and more, send a large SAE to BOBW, 109 Boulton Grange, Randlay, Telford TF3 2LF. We also buy all of the above. (5)

• **COLLECTION FOR** sale, 2000 AD 1-750 2000AD annual 1978-1991 Judge Dredd Annual 1981-1990 2000AD specials, 1977-1992 Dr Who Annual 1974-1983 Deadline 1-23, over 600 US comics including FF 232-292, Alpha Flight 1-28, many Batman, X-Men, various collector item issues. Offers to Andy. Tel: (0329) 846720. (4)

• **LARGE BUT** inconsistent collection, X-Men, Avengers, Spider man, Legion, Batman, 2000 AD, many, many others. Also hulks wanted, enquiries, offers, wants welcome. I may have that odd issue you need. Adrian Hudson, 14 Green Lane, Killamarsh, Sheffield S31 8BD. (4)

• **DEEP SPACE** Nine trading card set (100) £16.00, Spectra cards 1-4 £5.00 each, Wormhole card £7.00 each, single cards 20p (min 4) all include p&p. Cheques made to C.J. Wray, Best of Both Worlds, 109 Boulton Grange, Randlay, Telford, Salop. Also buy. (5)

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Mr P. Harris, 53 Boyswell House, Scholes, Wigan WN1 3QQ

• **BLACK AND** white comic strips from 1930s Canadian newspapers, admirably suited to framing only £5, 2 for £8.50 (whole page including pop, Blondie, Henry, Nebbs, Ben Webster, Just Kids, Annie Rooney, Toonerville folks, Newsboy, 43 Dundonald Road, Colwyn Bay LL29 7RE. Tel: (0492) 531303. (4)

• **OVER EIGHT** hundred 2000 ADs for sale. Many early issues, offers wanted. Send SAE for list to you: Mr P. Harris, 53 Boyswell House, Scholes, Wigan WN1 3QQ. (4)

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• **TV FILM** related collectables, comics books, badges, magazines, records, large selection 2000AD comics, posters, videos, also available, wants list welcome. Send 50p in stamps to David Rees, 15 Edmondson Street, Barnoldswick, Lancashire BB8 5EY. Tel: (0282) 814717 after 6pm. (4)

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working for American comics, particularly for DC. Does that also apply to the Megazine?

It seems so, but I don't begrudge anyone work. The *Megazine* provides new writers and artists a showcase and we get the benefit of their talents, at least for a while. The most recent example is Frank Quitely, who came to us from the pages of *Electric Soup*. Before his first work for us, *Missionary Man*, had even seen print, DC Comics were trying to lure him onto *Batman* and *Lobo*. Luckily for us, Frank had already committed himself to doing the first series of *Shimura* (published in *Megazines 37-39*) and the six-part *Missionary Man* story that starts in issue 50.

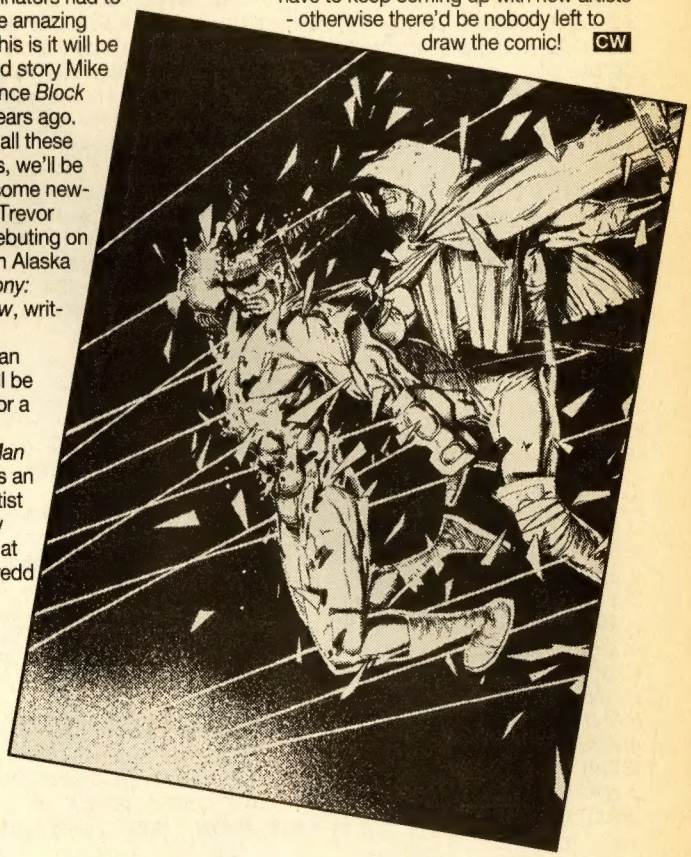
Hopefully Frank will still be available for the occasional job but I understand DC, Dark Horse and Marvel are all courting him!

What has the Megazine got lined up for coming issues?

For longtime fans of *2000AD* and Judge Dredd, we've got a special treat coming soon - Mike McMahon and John Wagner reunited on a Dredd series! *Howler* is a four-parter that's been in the works for nearly a year and is now nearly finished. One line best describes the story: Nobody ever said galactic dominators had to be smart! The amazing thing about this is it will be the first Dredd story Mike has drawn since *Block Mania* - 12 years ago.

Besides all these classic artists, we'll be introducing some newcomers too. Trevor Hairsine is debuting on a series set in Alaska called *Harmony: Blood & Snow*, written by Chris Standley. Sean Longcroft will be guest artist for a two-part *Missionary Man* story. There's an Australian artist called Ashley Woods hard at work on a Dredd four-parter...

With many of the recent newcomers now moving on to work for America, we have to keep coming up with new artists - otherwise there'd be nobody left to draw the comic! CW



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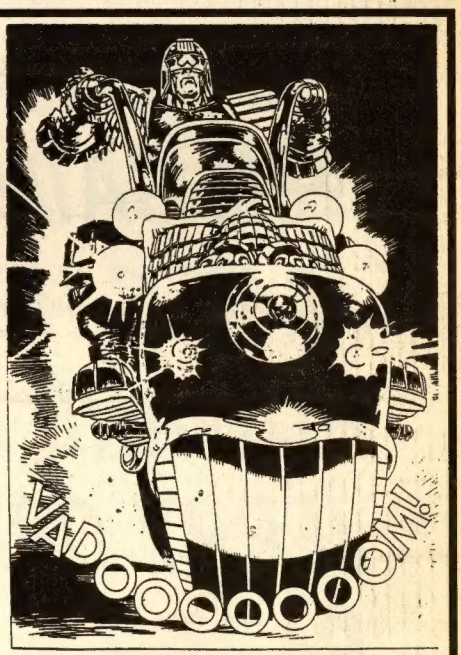

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